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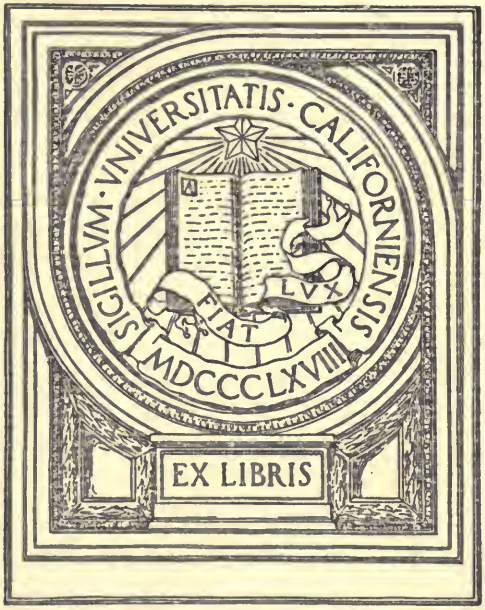

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THE PAGEANT OF ENGLAND

1900–1920

THE PAGEANT OF ENGLAND

1900—1920

A JOURNALIST'S LOG OF TWENTY REMARKABLE YEARS

BY

J. R. RAYNES

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This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day;
Thou cans't not then be false to any man.

DEDICATED

TO ALL

MY FRIENDS

Lib

IT is usual, I think, for an author to dedicate his first book to some close friend who has had a conspicuous influence upon his life. This book I dedicate to all my friends, beginning with my parents, to whom I owe an overwhelming debt; to my devoted wife, to whom my debt is not a whit less; to my schoolmasters, and to a wide circle of kindly and helpful friends in several towns of England. This is their book, and of their fashioning. I gladly acknowledge my vast indebtedness to the goodness of those whom I have known intimately. They have embraced all classes, all parties and all creeds, and in all these I have found good intent and great earnestness.

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In this Pageant of England, told as I have seen it unfold during these twenty very remarkable years, I have sought to keep as close to recognized truth as possible. That is to say, I have omitted expressions of view which I hold to be true, but which others would oppose as fallacy. Where it has been essential to express views, they are mine, and of no party creed. The truth may be tame, but it is eternal. It is out of exaggeration that contradiction springs and sectional animosity is aroused by rival camps indulging in extremities. Something is wrong with England, and its social grievances need righting. Thousands of young men who fought for England are leaving England, and we need them all. In a pastoral chapter a description of rural England is attempted, and in such fair regions, which I have ventured to call Colonial England, there is room for new towns and new developments. City

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life is congested and artificial, and a hopeful sign of the year is the rising of numerous garden suburbs. We are moving more surely than some may realize towards better times. I have used the example of the tapestry weavers, who only occasionally get a glimpse of their picture, as an illustration of what has been taking place these twenty years. A great design is being worked out, and to all the weavers with tangled threads my story is dedicated. May they all clearly realize that a new England is emerging, and that its form will be enriched by public service, not by thoughts of self. The heart of England is sound, and its tone is healthy. We have a reputation for "losing every battle but the last" and the last in this case is the winning of the Peace. Many specifics are offered:

So many prayers, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind;
While just the art of being kind,
Is all the sad world needs.

Lastly, this volume is dedicated with affection to all my colleagues of the Press, that gallant army of five thousand cheery "Nujjers," who have progressed while they have recorded progress. I have said very little about the Press, for this volume is not introspective, nor personal. When I shyly began in journalism there was no National Union of Journalists, no guaranteed wage, no guarantee of anything, not even of next week's work. The outward Bohemianism of pressmen, which revealed itself in unconventional dress and traces of snuff and a partiality towards whisky is dying away, but it is replaced by a mental Bohemianism of a new generation, thrice precious, and it will yet result in a revolt against "stunts" ordered for full operation against certain persons or ideas by one or two monopolists who control circulations running into millions. Newspaper enterprises have been bought up, editors changed, and policies re-moulded to capture public opinion for an aspiring group. This is not in the interests of journalism, nor of public life. The truly independent Press is not yet evolved, and organized Labour, which dilates about the "kept" Press,

has not evolved any other type. Probably the great reliable Press of the future will emerge from the extension of the freedom of the Press to all opinions and all possible information, and the abandonment of feverish "stunts" to stimulate artificial circulation. The modern newspaper is a wonderful production, and in the last five years it has recorded almost daily events and statements of world-wide importance and of permanent value. I should be an ingrate if I failed to add that my personal experience has been one of remarkable freedom in the Press. For eight years now I have known no dictator or controller in the slightest form, beyond the Press Bureau and my own conception. From the Press Bureau we were inundated with instructions and reminders, hundreds of them, during the war period. Some of them were disquieting, to be read and burned with fire, and the contents disclosed to no living person. The censorship certainly went beyond bounds of necessity and wisdom. It touched not only things military, but industrial and even political, and it was enforced by extraordinary vigilance and smart penalties upon offending newspapers. It imposed a new and irksome phase upon journalism, and greatly added to the anxieties of those who had to retain familiarity with countless restrictions.

It is my great hope that the numerous facts, figures and dates given in this volume, cloaked as kindly as possible in incident, story, and comment, will be more than acceptable to large numbers of young journalists, teachers, social students and others who will always have to study the greatness of these twenty years, during which motor transport has been evolved, the turbine discovered, the aeroplane devised, and the cinema added to our diversions. It is essentially the period of the ascent of women to full citizenship, and also it is the period of the bursting of the storm-cloud so long expected in Europe. If some readers should feel a lack of fascination in the civil history of the war period, I would remind them that its extraordinary changes are too recent to be viewed in correct perspective. Ten years hence, I hope, they will be looked back upon with astonishment, and the record will reach its true value. In the main, the task of compiling

this book has been delightful, but I cannot forget that thousands of fine young men who were in their cradles when I began newspaper work are in their graves to-day. They gave their lives for you and for me, and we are left to see the swallows and the June roses come again. They died for freedom, and the great call floating over the channel in the path of the rising sun every morning is that you shall live for freedom, and take the noblest part of which you are capable.

New houses are going up, new ideas finding expression and new hopes are being uttered. The next twenty years will reap or lose the reward of a great sacrifice. "Your castles are in the air," wrote Thoreau, "that is where they should be; now put the foundations under them." We have reached the time of foundation building, and all who lend a hand are my friends. To all of them I respectfully dedicate this volume.

J. R. R.

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SECTION ONE

THE OPENING OF THE CENTURY

CHAPTER I

In the Beginning—Destiny and First Impressions.

"IN the beginning was the word." And in the last resort also will be the word. Potent weapon, more powerful than any high explosive, its effect is not momentary, but abiding. A speech may be as startling as a battery of artillery, but a book with a purpose is more effective in its conquest than all the armies that ever marched in the long history of battles. The English language is surely a glorious instrument, and he who understands its infinite possibilities, and has the art of presenting them, is furnished with the power to sway nations for good or ill. It is, therefore, supremely true that the pen is mightier than the sword. Indeed, the pen has caused, and may yet cause, unless it is wisely directed, millions of armed men to march. It can overthrow Governments, and leave the deeds of statesmen in the parliaments of the world as a dim memory beside the abiding freshness of an author who may in his day have been obscure. This truth I felt but partially and unconsciously rather more than twenty years ago, when the fascination of the pen was strongly upon me and I felt that to enter the Fourth Estate would verily be to enter the Kingdom of Heaven in the flesh. And this truth I feel more strongly now, after playing a "remote, melancholy, slow" part in the production of the Press. Sometimes I dream of great

white clouds of paper falling from the heavens and burying me gently amid my own manuscripts produced during those happy, active, and rapidly passing years. I feel glad that I was born to see these great days, to be a close witness and a scribe of many of their events, and to nurse a hope of England and the brotherhood of man, for all that I have seen of sorrow and hilarity, of riches and poverty, of war and peace.

> 'Tis all a chequer board of nights and days,
> Where destiny with men for pieces plays.

There is something much more profound in that statement of the Persian philosopher than you have probably realized. Or why should I be destined to look upward every time a bird calls, and to feel a thrill of childish joy when one of the pretty songsters comes near? I cannot help it now, because as a little child I peeped through the cracks between the battens of the bedroom floor and saw there, within six inches of my eye, the pale blue eggs of a starling and the glossy sheen of the parent birds looking so brilliant in that close view. Destiny did that for me, just as destiny caused a friend of mine to first realize he was alive when standing under the canopy of a gypsy's tent, while a swarthy Romany *chal* played the violin. He, later in life, was irresistibly drawn to the gypsies; he learned the Romany tongue, lectured and wrote books on gypsies, and until his death, hastened by the sorrows of war, no gypsy caravan passed within ten miles of his home in sweet rural England without going that way to call. That momentary impression upon an infant mind remained indelibly there, and has blessed thousands. Even so I have felt my city friends guilty of sacrilege for talking while a goldfinch sang.

So also it was with the Press. My second earliest impression of childhood, and the first view I had of an occupation in the great world was of reporters instead of starlings. I saw this circle of young men writing something in books, and when other people cheered our member, they took no notice. Their pencils made strange and wonderful signs on paper, and all the pencil points seemed to be having a frolic over little hills and level plains.

Then, on a hot summer afternoon in 1892, when the whole school was drowsy with the warm still air, and we young ten-year-olds felt moist and restless, our schoolmaster suggested that we should spend an hour in writing essays on what we should like to be ! Foolscap sheets that looked the size of acres were served out, and sixty boys in a large elementary school in a country town of Derbyshire began to write how much they would like to be certain things. Seeing that the little town was surrounded by collieries, and was near to the " Hills of Annesley, bleak and barren, where my thoughtless childhood wandered," as Byron wrote, it was not surprising that many boys decided to be colliery managers and deputies, or farmers, or keepers, or policemen, or soldiers, or sailors, and their imagination was roaming over the paper while I halted. Half the hour had passed before, in desperation, I wrote the first line, " I should like to be a Reporter." The trouble was that I knew nothing about the business ; for reporters just came on the scene like swallows, from nowhere, and vanished again to some distant clime. Well, I did my best, and how elated I was when the good master expressed the hope that some day I might be a reporter. Ah, my lad, if you had realized then how ill-requited is the average journalist for his great care, his enterprise, and sometimes his genius, would you have halted ? If you had seen

eighteen dark months ahead in which you would receive only 6s. a week as a learner, and it would leave only a penny a day for dinner, and even David Copperfield was a prince to you, with his sixpence a day, would you have chosen journalism? If you had foretasted the alternate days of bowls of soup with a slice of bread, or Yorkshire pudding and gravy, or have foreseen the kindness of the red-haired waiter towards your youthful shabby gentility, would you have chosen journalism? If you had foreseen twenty years of inconspicuous toil during night and day, many arduous journeys and narrow escapes, long fags at the desk and long "takes" at political meetings and Assize Courts, and all for just a living wage, without £100 to bless yourself with at the end of the twenty years, would you have chosen journalism? Yes, I would, and I would again to-day were the choice to be mine again. For the last eight years I have worked in intimate association with a community of 120 active journalists, and I have never heard one word spoken in anger amongst them. They have shared each other's joys and sorrows, met peer and peasant with equal sang-froid, and extinguished all rivalry.

But I anticipate. Schooldays ended in the summer of 1899, and I was launched upon the world full of the knowledge and confidence of youth, to seek a situation.

There was a bye-election proceeding near by and a good Liberal candidate was fighting the cause of democracy. He was a wealthy baronet, and the eyes of all England seemed upon that constituency. Polling clerks were wanted and I was engaged to fold up speeches and election addresses, to direct envelopes and to insert photographs of our political hero. The scale of pay astonished me, and so did the "regardless of expense" motto about all our

meals. Week after week we worked at full pressure, long hours every day, while public excitement rose to a high pitch. Each week I carried home a wage almost equal to my father's, and with what proud delight did I carry it!

But greater than a big wage, fine meals, and peeps into the political machine, was a visit paid by the editor of the local newspaper. He was gathering information, and public notices at so much a line, and to me fell the distinction of handing him the documents that were to appear in the newspaper! He talked with me as if there was no distinction between himself and ordinary men and casually remarked that Hamel, his reporter, was leaving him. Hamel, a very prince in my eyes, and leaving too. I flushed deeply, but did not dare to utter the impossible hope that his announcement created. He must have noticed the sudden start and the hope instantly suppressed, for he continued, "John, should you like to come on the newspaper?" Should I! How emphatically I assured him and re-assured him that nothing in the world could so delight me as to be given a chance, and I would work hard and I knew shorthand and—"I'll write you an offer," he said, in quite an off-hand manner, as if this sort of thing happened every day. That evening I walked on air! Newspapers gave me greater elation that day than they have ever yielded since, though they have fed me, clothed me and housed me these twenty years. Now I have brought you to the brink of that stream on which we launch away into public life. Hereafter we will rely not upon memory but upon my diary, written from boyhood, and we will take the course of events as they come, widening out to the full tide of national life. Therefore let us ring up the curtain, and look at the great pageant of England during twenty of the most vital years of its history, at events that

were epoch making. We will survey England in the national and local aspect during a period that has proved a veritable transition from nineteenth century ideas to the post-war era, full of hopes, doubts, fears and great possibilities.

CHAPTER II

Our Township—Plain and Homely Folk—First Experiences—A Miners' Strike—A Tactful Chief Constable—The First Motor-car.

SURELY no young man could start a career in life under more congenial circumstances than I did. Truly, I did live in "an old-fashioned town," among plain, homely hill folk. New inspiration came to me every day from the fact that the very steep hill which I ascended every morning from home to the office had been walked just as often as I walked it by one of England's most charming writers of rural scenes, William Howitt, whose birthplace I passed daily, and never, I think, without a thought backward down the years. The evening walk was a positive tumble down hill, it was so steep, and always one thought, uninvited and still unavoidable, came over me as I beheld those majestic hills rising and falling at every point. The thought coupled with those eternal and majestic hills was just this :—

A thousand ages in Thy sight,
Are like an evening gone.

The crystal air, and the effort caused by the hills, free then from the clang of electric trams, conduced to a foundation of perfect health, which has endured much since. The people were as rugged and impressive as the landscape, and in their kindly way they regarded me as

peculiarly their own. Had not my grandfather been surveyor of that parish, measuring the length of roads and frontages by notches on his cart wheels? Did not my ancestors for nearly two hundred years back lie resting in a peaceful churchyard near by? And thinking of burial grounds, I fancy much of the goodness of these people must have been impressed upon them by a great examplar. In the beautifully situated local burial ground was a conspicuous monument erected by public subscription to the memory of one Dr. Donovan, who for many years travelled this extensive district winter and summer, night and day, to relieve patients in distress, and never was known to present a bill, not to rich or poor. Old inhabitants spoke of him with veneration, and told how on his faithful pony he plodded through snowstorms and floods and gales, gave of his best, only received what payments were sent out of a sense of honour, and treated all people alike. He was much beloved, and never short of the means of life, and when he passed away all the villages around wept for that great man who had been gathered to his fathers. I rather think the people are still paying the bill to Dr. Donovan in their kind treatment of every one else.

Then for inspiration, too, every road and bypath, and every old character, finds a place in abiding literature, thanks to the love of William and Mary Howitt. Even many of the trees have singular and special mention, and no parish outside the Lake District has a more literary collection of trees. For the Howitt estate, trees were secured from the homes of many poets, and it was my great delight to make this discovery, and to set out in search of those trees. The old farmer at his early milking looked in amaze when I told him where other trees used to stand, and what they were until modern estate development spoiled the collection to make way for showy little houses. Near

by, too, was the residence of England's first Astronomer Royal, James Flamsteed, for whom Greenwich Observatory was built, and there he and Sir Isaac Newton collaborated to chart the heavens and to make it possible for all to understand natural laws, and for mariners to cross the wide seas in safety. Most delightful it was, too, in the early summer, to gather a basket of primroses or violets or bluebells before breakfast, to watch little white cotton tail rabbits scampering about, and to see kingfisher or goldfinch darting as visions of perfect beauty. On these early morning tours, afoot or by bicycle, I got more abiding news, hot from Nature's press, than I often got in a whole day of busy engagements.

There is a delightful intimacy in small towns, and it has great value, far transcending the minor disadvantages. You know everybody, and they trust you. An accident to one person is everybody's business, a wedding is a town's talk, and a funeral is a message of silence to all. I confess that I was more impressed with local events then than I have ever been in wiring thousands of words on national events since. To the journalist in particular a country training is of distinct value, for his duties are manifold, his engagements marvellously varied, and he is constantly tuned up to accuracy and care because he is meeting the same people all the time. If he falls ill they are all solicitous, and the councillor and the policeman alike call to know all about it. Your city junior lacks these advantages, and has none that fully compensate for them.

Will you permit me, therefore, to introduce you first to a passing glance of the daily pageant of a small country town, such as you, a Londoner, or a Lancastrian or Yorkshireman would declare off-hand to be the last place God made. But even here, and in all the small places like it, is a well-ordered, law-abiding, self-contained community,

fulfilling its great service to England. Here are miners, a constant stream of them, crossing the market square on their way home. It is the middle of the afternoon, and the sun looks down on their clothes dark with coal dust, and their faces darker still from the same cause. To a stranger they all look much alike, and quite unrecognizable in their uniform blackness of visage. But to some of us the sense of darkness has long passed and every countenance is clear and distinct. The miners, who penetrate into the bowels of the earth to keep us warm in winter, are the favourite butt of all grumblers and profiteers, but I love them yet. Have I not seen the bad and good in them? Once I stood at a pit head when the cage had crashed, and twenty men were hurled down that frightful chasm. Then I saw these men in grimy pit dirt transformed into ministering angels, risking life, without hesitation, to help. I saw fathers embrace and kiss farewell to sons who would have passed hence before the stretcher was raised to the ambulance van. Many miners I have known killed by falls of roof and by explosions of after-damp, and I have seen them, after being washed clean of coal dust, remaining blue with bruises. In deep pits and shallow pits I have been with them, seen instances of the risks they run, and have wondered how long science will think it necessary to keep half a million sturdy Britishers in the mines day by day.

A new policeman, quite an autocrat, came to our town, and he had a very poor opinion of miners. He knew they drank and gambled and swore, and he set himself upon a holy crusade to efface these evils from the worthy town. A small group of them, headed by one Samson, a tall and powerful fellow, set themselves the task of effacing the policeman, and one dark night, in a dark nook, they molested the policeman and placed him, unconscious, over

a garden wall ! But it was the wrong policeman ! The mistake caused them deep chagrin, and especially as they all suffered terms of imprisonment.

We had a miners' strike of a very serious character, and the entire district was depressed into abject poverty for several weeks. One afternoon, when privation was reaching a desperation point, a long procession of miners marched into the market square, headed by a black flag. Order had hitherto been preserved by the Dublin Fusiliers and by numerous mounted police, but on this particular afternoon neither of these forces was visible. As the miners filed into the square, there entered the Chief Constable of the district. He was a very young man holding a degree and he was consummating a boyish desire to be a fine policeman. In the last twenty years I have come into contact with many brave and astute policemen, but I have not since seen an incident to equal in courage and sagacity the action of this afternoon of which we are speaking. The Chief walked, wearing mufti, and escorted by his little terrier, to the head of the procession, and stopped it to hold palaver with the leaders. They at once avowed their intention to march to the —— pit and set the head stocks on fire. The Chief told them it was a highly foolish and dangerous project, and that, if they went, they would find the Fusiliers in their way, and many miners' wives would be widows in the morning. He talked quietly and kindly, with perfect composure, although the moment was of tremendous import, and as he talked he produced a huge pouch of tobacco.

" How long is it since you had a smoke ? " he asked the leaders.

" Fortnight," replied one peremptorily, and " four days " replied a second.

" Fill up," he said, " and pass the pouch along."

It was passed along, and one could trace its course by the rising of curls of smoke and striking of matches.

"What do you say?" said some; and some were for going and some were against.

"Now, my lads," said the Chief, "You are not going, for I don't want any of you hurt. Take a march round the town and hold a meeting here. You may have good news to-morrow."

They took the march and held the meeting, and the Fusiliers, gay with their busbies and scarlet tunics, marched back to town. That night the soldiers showered money through the Town Hall windows for the children. That night, too, we had hopeful news in the office, and the town was full of rumours of settlement. At noon on the following day the glad news of industrial peace came and one of our dear old souls assembled all the miners in the market square. They cheered the news again and again, and then, all standing bare-headed, soldiers and police drawn up into ranks alongside, they all sang the Doxology, and as the strain of nearly a thousand voices arose with

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow

I saw the Chief Constable remove his helmet and bend to hide his tears.

Strife! my brothers, so easily launched by misunderstanding and selfishness on both sides, is awful in its effects, and after many experiences of great strikes I declare they are rarely worth while. They are tragedies without reward.

When the first motor-car penetrated these parts it created a profound sensation. It seems scarcely credible in these days of motor haulage and swift conveyance in carriages as luxurious as drawing-rooms that this enormous business was in its infancy twenty years ago, yet so it was. The

first motor-car came chuffling through our town, in the year 1900, and one of the spectators near to me was a Methodist Sunday-school teacher, of venerable years. As he saw this strange horseless vehicle hurrying down a hill he put his hands together, and with trembling lips prayed for the safety of those poor men in the runaway cart ! The good man seriously thought that the horse had run away ! When he saw it mount the corresponding hill he was perfectly amazed.

It was a poor thing truly, in comparison to modern automobiles, but despite its comparatively rude structure, it was the herald of the new era, the twentieth century.

The century began in war, and it has continued in war. In its first years there was all the thrill of news of battle from South Africa, but the spirit of controversy was quite strong enough at home to maintain a heated newspaper argument as to whether the year 1900 was really the first year of the twentieth century or the closing year of the nineteenth. This question was furiously argued by numerous correspondents, and a leader on the wonderful achievements of the closing century brought down sharp abuse. On Monday, January 1st, the Lord Mayor of a neighbouring city wished the aldermen and councillors and burgesses a happy New Year "on this opening day of the closing year of the nineteenth century." One correspondent worked out a complete record "of the beginning and ending, the birth and death, of all the centuries in the Christian dispensation, past, present and future," and he endeavoured to prove by his figures that we were still in the nineteenth century.

Other correspondents showed how, if you had a hundred oranges, and ate one orange a year, you would have eaten all of them at the end of the ninety-ninth year, and, therefore,

needed a new supply of oranges; in other words, a new century of good round years. An official dictum that the twentieth century had begun, left many correspondents doubtfully shaking their wise heads, but the official fact remained.

A certain liveliness, if I may use a now familiar military phrase, was also manifest in our office. Printers are notorious for jests and snuff-boxes, and in my first office both were distinctly in evidence. Our foreman compositor loved both, and the evidence of snuff was clear by the colour of his waistcoat down the centre, and the evidence of a spirit of fun was clear from the practical jokes he played on the errand boys and apprentices. Every new boy was subjected to some new and brilliant escapade and I clearly remember seeing one dispatched in great haste with a bucket to run to the gas works for two-pennyworth of gas to start the "blinking" engine! And away went that poor boy in deadly earnest. On another occasion a boy was sent from the packing-room below to the stock-room two floors higher to "Give my compliments to Mr. Jones and ask him to kindly send me the yarnamatoot block."

"The what?" asked the boy respectfully.

"The yarnamatoot block, fellow! can't you say it?" replied the foreman.

"Yes, sir."

"Then go and say it to Mr. Jones and be careful."

Away went the boy to Mr. Jones.

"Mr. Robinson's compliments, sir, and will you please send him the yarnamatoot block."

"The what?"

"The block, sir."

"Oh, he must mean this; mind how you go with it," and Mr. Jones indicated a huge block of wood, a massive piece of tree trunk, similar to those seen in butchers' shops,

and just like one astray, if such a heavy article could accidentally stray.

The boy surveyed it nervously, and well the poor boy might, but, quite undaunted, he began to lever it towards that giddy flight of stairs.

"Better not go first, let the block go first," said Mr. Jones dryly, and by slow degrees the boy got the tremendously weighty article to the brink of the first stair. Just at that moment it chanced that the governor, passing from the composing to the machine room, looked up the stairs. He paused but for a moment as he saw that heavy block slip the first step, and knew that nothing could save it. There was nothing at all dignified in the way the governor departed. The block came with one impetuous rush, smashing stairs, bruising on both sides, and ending with a tremendous crash at the foot. And there, too, was the boy! With his puny strength he had tried to steady its first step, and he had come toppling down behind it. Let us draw a veil over the subsequent noise made about it.

In these days of the segregation of the mentally unfit, it might be mentioned that our community was replete not only with magistrates, councillors, guardians, industrial workers, brass bands, and sundry other amenities of civilization, but it possessed a choice assortment of village idiots. The glory of Mr. Dick's kite-flying was eclipsed by these young men who played horses together round the streets, and paraded beside the drummer of the Salvation Army. They drove imaginary herds of cattle with loud shouts and much cracking of whips, and took many a pair of unseen horses with great care down our steep declines.

They would sing hymns interspersed with fearful language, do any errand for a penny, and get a ton of coal in for twopence.

They never quarrelled, they seemed very happy, and forced their attentions on nobody. But the Mental Deficiency Act has kindly removed this obtrusion from our midst and it is far better so.

CHAPTER III

The South African War—Famine in India—The Boxer Insurrection—The Last Election without Motors—A Comedy of Electricity—Names of the Year.

THE South African War was the outstanding event of the first two years of this century. A state of war had been declared on October 12, 1899, between this country and the republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and the war fever ran high in this country. War considerations overwhelmed all others, but at the beginning of 1900 none ever dreamed that the war would be so prolonged. The entire Boer population in the two States was little more than half a million, just the population of a respectable city. The maximum force at the disposal of the enemy was at the most 75,000 men, aided by European arms which had been transferred over British lines labelled as "pianos" and other hard goods. There were German artillery experts, French and even British officers assisting the enemy, and another factor of enormous value to the Boers was their close familiarity with the vast territory over which they maintained a guerilla warfare for three years. There was division in England about the justice of the war, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. W. T. Stead and many others found themselves unable to support the Government in its prosecution. It was regarded by them as a war for mining and capitalist interests,

launched on reasons easily secured by the actions of certain holders of big South African interests. Lord Salisbury, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. Balfour, Mr. St. John Brodrick and others, just as warmly contended that the war was just and, unless we were a cowardly nation desiring to evade Imperial responsibilities, it was unavoidable. The Liberal party was acutely divided by it, and Sir Edward Grey, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane and several others vehemently dissociated themselves from the declarations of the anti-war speakers at the Queen's Hall, at Exeter Hall, at Birmingham, Leeds and other centres. I have lively recollections of many of these controversial meetings, and the rough play that followed them. The taking of Spion Kop, the relief of Ladysmith, of Kimberley and Mafeking, were all made occasions for war demonstrations in London and in practically all the centres of the country. Great processions were organized on these occasions; there was the blare of brass bands, excited cheering, and often the smashing of windows for the good of the cause. Several times I was out long after midnight as a witness of scenes of tumult. In Mr. Chamberlain's "raging and tearing propaganda" he declared with great intensity of feeling "that there were no Little Englanders in the Colonies, and if there were, the Colonies would know how to deal with them." This remark was wildly cheered, and I always fancied that certain people in England drew an inference, probably never intended, of how to deal with so-called "Little Englanders" here. Hence Mr. Lloyd George had to don the uniform of a policeman to escape the disorderly crowd waiting for him outside Birmingham Town Hall, and other people, not having these facilities to hand, came off with less good fortune. The public was regaled daily with stories of Boer atrocities, and told that these vulgar people ate

eggs which were partly incubated. Excitement rose to almost fever heat over the impending relief of Mafeking, and when the fact was accomplished England went into hysteria. London was jubilant, and so was the smallest village.

But the South African War did not overwhelm all other interests. Famine and plague were jointly ravaging India, and millions of unhappy natives died. A relief fund started in London realized £100,000 in ten days, and the supreme efforts made to save human life reflected a finer side to imperial enthusiasm.

Personally, I am not a Little Englander, and I look with hope and complete confidence to a magnificent future for the British Empire. Even if a sound League of Nations proves a forlorn hope, I invite trust in the Empire as a great guarantee for the world's peace. England was touchy and feverish during 1900, and the Press conducted not only news of war, but controversy with the biting Press of France and Germany. There was talk of war with France, and dangerous speculation as to the comparative fitness of the two nations. Mr. Chamberlain, at Birmingham, administered a sharp reproof to a German Minister who had protested against alleged atrocities by the British in the Transvaal. Mr. Chamberlain's declaration was that the conduct of our troops compared very favourably with that of the German troops in 1870-71 ; and that he did not thank a foreign Minister for gratuitous advice. This retort created a sensation, and the German Emperor, who had previously telegraphed his good wishes to President Paul Kruger, made the very happy remark that the Press of his country was throwing stones and the Governments would have to pay for the broken glass. There was the age-long discussion once again of an offensive by Russia through Persia and into Afghanistan, directed towards

India. Press and public alike revealed a state of perplexity, and the possibility of great continental developments out of the war then running its course. Those developments were fourteen years in maturing, but they came about, and with disastrous consequences. Nor was America too friendly, again judging by the printed word.

Neither motors nor aeroplanes were used during the South African War, and it was the last great war fought without these mechanical aids. Enormous numbers of horses were needed and balloons were used for observation posts. Trench warfare was of a crude character compared to its great development fourteen years later, and barbed wire entanglements were small and feeble by comparison to the death-traps to be stretched later across France and Belgium. Great tracks of South Africa were devastated by numerous fires during the war. It may have been necessary to burn farmsteads and holdings as the troops advanced, but it was war, and they were burned and terrible suffering was caused as a consequence to Boer women and children. So soon as the facts of its acute nature were known in this country, relief missions were organized, and Mrs. Henry Fawcett headed a body of devoted ladies who waged war against pestilence and famine. Disease slew thousands of our men, more indeed, than did the Boer bullets, and a Commission sat afterwards—in private—to investigate the whole conduct of the war, reporting, eventually, in the year 1903.

Ireland, that perennial fount of political troubles, was very much in the public eye in 1900. In that year Queen Victoria commanded that all Irish regiments in the Army should be allowed to wear the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day, a concession that was deeply appreciated by all the sons of Erin with the colours. Parenthetically may I remark that 1900 also saw a decided abandonment of the

gaiety of Army uniforms. Nineteenth-century regiments have been brilliant in scarlet, blue and gold, and an international procession of troops through London was a picturesque spectacle. It was the veldt warfare of South Africa which taught the dire need of protective colouring for soldiers, and khaki and field grey came into military affairs never to pass out again so long as armies remain. But to get back to the shamrock, which was responsible for that diversion, its application to the Army immensely popularized the "wearin' o' the green," and it softened very materially the anti-English sentiments of Dublin. So much so that a few weeks later (April 2nd), Queen Victoria crossed to Ireland and in the course of three weeks' visit had many extremely civil receptions without any untoward incident.

John Ruskin died on January 20th of 1900, leaving published works that will delight all who love splendid English diction. His views on art and beauty were exquisitely expressed in simple but most effective language, and even his views on political economy were worth studying for the lofty expressions he used. He was born February 8, 1819, a few months before Queen Victoria, and when the two names were associated in many an obituary notice it was little thought that the Sovereign would only survive a few months longer. Her last Parliament, as it proved: the fourteenth of her reign, and the twenty-sixth of the United Kingdom, was opened by Royal Commission, and its seventh and closing session was far from happy. There were dissolution rumours within a month, and the autumn saw a keenly contested "khaki" election. A vigorous election campaign without motors is hardly realizable now, but the mechanical vehicle was then in its experimental stage, and no candidate would risk the welfare of his electors by such conveyances. Horse buses and horse

trams were in general use and it was the bright hey-day of the carriage and pair. Horse breeding had reached its climax as a consuming hobby, and the super-rich had not dreamed of 'phoning the garage for a Rolls Royce or Daimler. Electric trams had begun to clang along the streets, even on the same streets as the old horse cars, but the latter were left as effete and slow, unable to get up hills and shy to come down them by comparison with the new system which scoffed at gradients, thanks to the power of the mysterious "juice." One tramway manager I knew was always dubious about this invisible element and for months after his cars were propelled by power, he kept his stables well littered with straw, always ready for horses. "This stuff that no man ever seen yet will be gone some fine morning," he said to me, "and they'll go back to the good old hoss. I can't stand this idea of holding handles and drivin' nowt!"

A very great improvement in the transit facilities of London was made in the same year by the opening of the Central London Railway from the Bank to Shepherd's Bush. The story of London's rapid tube and underground service is a romance of science in itself, for as London has widened its borders, so it has quickened its pace to eliminate distance, until the mammoth is to-day a very good place to avoid as much as possible! The addition I have referred to was opened by the Prince of Wales on June 27th.

For months past many anxious eyes had been turning towards China, where a Boxer insurrection was menacing all European interests, and "foreign devils" were in very real danger. There were alarming reports about the fate of the Pekin Legations, and on July 17th the country was deeply stirred by the sensational and very circumstantial reports of the fall of the Legations and the murder of the inhabitants. These reports were chiefly confined to one

halfpenny newspaper, but *The Times* published obituary notices of the officers and residents in the British Legation, thus confirming the worst fears. Several other well-conducted journals contained no hint of such a calamity, and in subsequent issues threw doubt on the whole story. Within a few days came the very welcome news that on July 21st the Legation was safe, and on August 15th it was relieved by allied forces. The only loss, it was then discovered, was of the German Plenipotentiary, who was killed in the street. During this effort of allied forces in China, German, British, French and Japanese fought side by side and cheered each other on, although the newspapers of London, Berlin and Paris were creating friction between those nations. President Kruger was cheered in Paris, and received in audience by Queen Wilhelmina. Count Zeppelin was experimenting with his huge airships, and the world seemed on the qui vive for unknown troubles. An event was soon to fall of such magnitude as to still idle gossip and give pause to all conspirators. That event was entirely unthought of when, on December 19th, a memorial service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral for those who had fallen in South Africa. It was a great occasion, and similar services were held in almost all the churches of the land. It had been a year of sacrifice for England, and as yet the clouds were gathering more darkly. In the same month Parliament had re-assembled, with Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister. His Government had secured a complete victory in the election, having 402 supporters, against 186 Liberal and Labour members, and 82 Irish. A political event of some interest was the holding of the first annual conference of the Labour Party. It was a minute affair compared with those which I attended in 1919 and 1920, but it was the start of the separate and distinct National Labour Party.

While these events were transpiring, the South African War was proceeding vigorously. On February 28th Ladysmith was entered by Lord Dundonald, greatly to the relief of General Sir George White and his defending forces. Just twenty years after this event London has found a place of honour for an equestrian statue of the defender of Ladysmith. On March 27th General Joubert, Commander-in-Chief of the Boer Forces, died, and on May 17th Mafeking was relieved by Colonel Mahon. Baden-Powell, who had defended it since October 15th of 1899, was gazetted General, and he was lionized at the Cape and in this country. During this campaign very important messages were flashed by heliograph to divisional headquarters, and there was every reason to believe they were read and copied by the enemy. Such a recollection is in vivid contrast to the methods used in later continental warfare. The names of the year were essentially military —Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, Sir Redvers Buller, Sir John French, Sir George White, and General Gatacre —and their countenances were familiar in nearly every household. Lord Roberts was made Commander-in-Chief in South Africa on September 30th, with Lord Kitchener as his Chief of Staff. On October 20th Sir Redvers Buller returned, arriving on November 9th. There was at that time a general feeling that he had not been quite fairly treated, and the crowds gave him a tremendous ovation. A year later he was put on the retired list and on half-pay in consequence of a speech, but every letter from soldiers who had served under General Buller breathed devotion and admiration for him, and that spirit permeated England. I was a witness of the wild enthusiasm of the people for General Buller. I saw soldiers kneel before him and old ladies, whose sons had been with him, kissed his hand. Standing head and shoulders above most men, he was for

two years after his return an idol of the people. To-day Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener and Sir Redvers Buller have all passed to their long home, and the old controversy might be allowed to sleep with them.

CHAPTER IV

Death of Queen Victoria—Memories of Her Reign—King Edward VII—The Australian Commonwealth—Motors and "Motor Balloons"—The Cyclist's Ichabod!

THE mimosa, the beautiful and fragrant emblem of Australia, was much in evidence on January 1, 1901, for on that day Lord Hopetown, as Governor-General, first inaugurated the Australian Commonwealth. This vast colony had rapidly developed since the wild gold rush of forty years previously and Sydney and Melbourne had each grown into first-class cities of the Empire, with populations of something like half a million each. The Queen sent a message—her last to Australia—conveying her good wishes for the growth and prosperity of the Commonwealth, and Australia was much to the fore in all public gatherings. London had a further interest two days later in extending a tremendous welcome home from South Africa to Earl Roberts, who, on the previous day, had received his earldom and the honour of K.G. from the Queen at Osborne. On January 16th the Queen was out driving, and on the 18th there was national regret at the announcement in the Court Circular that the Queen was not in her usual health, and "was to abstain for the present from transacting business." The next day's bulletin was still more ominous, that "the Queen was suffering from great physical prostration, accompanied by symptoms that cause anxiety." The mood of sorrow was manifest

everywhere during these days of silent watching. Social and festive gatherings were abandoned and concerts were cancelled. At midnight on the 20th the Osborne bulletin stated that "The Queen's condition has late this evening become more serious, with increased weakness and diminished power of taking nourishment." On the same day the German Emperor arrived in London, having cancelled all the festivities in connection with the two hundredth anniversary of the German monarchy, in order to express his personal concern for Queen Victoria. By January 21st public opinion was profoundly stirred throughout the world by the prevailing belief, destined soon to prove correct, that Queen Victoria's last hours had arrived, and that a reign without precedent for distinction and advancement was rapidly winding to a close. The bulletins from Osborne were posted at the Mansion House in London and at provincial Town Halls and post offices. There were continual groups around these notices, and one man would be seen reading out the brief message to others around. Old and young of all classes were deeply moved. The last significance was attached to the announcement that the German Emperor, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of York, and the Duke of Connaught, had left London for Osborne. Any firm hopes of the Queen's recovery had now gone, and during January 22nd bulletins were issued hourly, indicating that the Queen was "slowly sinking," and in the evening the sorrowful, but now expected, tidings sped over the wires of the world that Queen Victoria expired at 6.30 p.m., "surrounded by her children and grandchildren," of whose presence she was quite conscious. The astonishingly deep effect upon the public indicated what a very real place the Queen had won in the minds and hearts of the nation during her sixty-four years' reign. The Jubilee in 1887

and the Diamond Jubilee in 1897 had been observed with universal rejoicing, and at her death a nation went into black. Indeed, the outward signs of personal loss were marked all over the world. The vast majority of people had known no other British sovereign, and only the few veterans could look beyond her reign. She was the first constitutional sovereign and the greatest. When the Lord Mayor of London received the telegram from the Prince of Wales, the blinds of the Mansion House were lowered, and the State bell at St. Paul's began its ominous toll, which continued for two hours. The whole of London closed down, including all places of amusement, and throughout England the same rule was spontaneously observed.

The period of Queen Victoria's reign had seen the emancipation of children from factory labour, and of women from work down the mines. It witnessed a distinct advance in the standard of life of all classes, the rise and development of several great cities from small beginnings, a great extension of railways and the passing of the stage coach. It saw the world belted with a network of telegraph and telephone lines, the construction of ocean greyhounds, and, greater than all these, a new and more lofty conception of human life. Public health measures passed from the spasmodic and haphazard to the organized and systematic. Free education was already uplifting the populace and the extended franchise had brought Parliament into closer touch with the ordinary householder. Her death, therefore, marked an epoch of uncommon brilliance, and there is small wonder that all people thought very deeply during those dramatic days of January, 1901.

King Edward arrived in London on January 23rd and informed the Privy Council that day of his desire to be known as Edward VII, leaving the name Albert to

be exclusively associated with one—his father. He took the oath as monarch, and on January 24th there was all the traditional ceremony of proclamation. The body of the late Queen was carried by highlanders and bluejackets to the Royal Yacht *Alberta,* on which it was conveyed across the Solent between lines of British and foreign warships, to Portsmouth Harbour, the entire front being thronged by thousands of spectators of this imposing spectacle. All night the yacht lay at anchor within the harbour, and next morning the body was conveyed by train to Victoria Station, London. The coffin was met by a gun carriage, drawn by the same eight cream horses used in the Jubilee procession of 1897. Millions of people lined the route to Paddington Station, and as the solemn procession came into view it was noticed that the German Emperor, the King of England and the Duke of Connaught, came behind the coffin as chief mourners, and close by were the Kings of Portugal and Greece, the King of the Belgians, the German Crown Prince, Prince Henry of Prussia, and some forty royal personages. All the nations of the earth were represented in that historic procession. At Windsor the body was conveyed to the Albert Memorial Chapel and on February 4th it was transferred to the Mausoleum at Frogmore.

The day of the funeral was intensely cold and the greater part of England lay under a deep white mantle of snow. From the capital this was rapidly cleared, but in many provincial towns this white carpet had a most striking effect. Long processions of mourning poeple marched to many parish churches in a profound silence. The usual sound of marching men was effectively muffled by nature's own silencer and there comes before my vision as I write this marvellous panorama of sharp black and white and a great silence until all are gathered within the doors, and the

strains of the organ lead off that hymn I had heard so often at interments of lesser note : "Now the labourer's task is o'er." Several times I had seen Queen Victoria at public functions, bowing repeatedly to right and left in acknowledgment of plaudits, but over this last great muster to her name there fell an appropriate hush, even of the footfall, and men communed in whispers.

The German Emperor's birthday occurred while he was in this country—January 27th—and on the occasion he was appointed a Field-Marshal in the British Army, the Crown Prince being invested with the Order of the Garter. A few days later King Edward and Queen Alexandra opened Parliament in State, and the King proceeded on a visit to Germany.

A trial which created world-wide interest took place in July. It was that of Earl Russell on a charge of bigamy. He was found guilty and sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

This trial and sentence did much to disabuse the public of a notion that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. In many years of Assize Court experience I have acquired a profound admiration for the impartiality of British courts of justice. Every alleged offender has a fair trial, and a chance to prove his or her innocence, and if guilt is proved, the law is no respecter of persons. This high tradition has had incalculable effect upon the native races of all colours and climes in the Empire.

Several times I saw great popular demonstrations in honour of General Baden-Powell after his return in July of 1901, and for a period I found it a duty to veritably travel with Earl Roberts, the most popular little soldier of his time. There were local demonstrations all over England to welcome home village heroes from the war, and practically every church has its memorial to the

young men whose bones are whitening under the African veldt.

On September 6th an event occurred in America which startled the world. It was the shooting of President McKinley at the Chicago Exhibition by a man with whom he was actually shaking hands at the time. The callous manner of this assassination caused a universal sense of horror and repulsion. Eight days later the President succumbed to his wounds, the third holder of his office to meet death by similar treachery. London had its own anxiety at the time, no less than a virulent outbreak of small-pox. In September, 151 cases were notified in a week, and these were rapidly doubled to 396 ; three months later the weekly cases numbered 945, and the decline did not set in until the weekly total had reached 1,554.

The Navy Estimates provided for submarines for the first time, and British experiments began with under-water vessels. It is interesting to read the speeches at this point and to find that no practical service whatever was expected from these new craft ! They were merely to ascertain why other Navies were building them and to see in how far the new craft might be a menace to the British Navy. I saw some of these early submarines, and very remarkable vessels we all thought they were, popping up out of the water like whales coming up to blow, and then gliding into harbour much like a row of cigars strung together. But looking backward from 1920, they really were very small, very insecure and very experimental. They were, however, the beginning.

The development of motor-cars and continental speed races, led to the issue of Local Government regulations in 1901 relative to locomotives on highways. Hitherto it had been technically illegal for an automobile to proceed at a speed greater than five miles an hour, or to go through

traffic without a man walking in front with a red flag! The law was more honoured in the breach than the observance, but the regulations which I have mentioned were the first basis of the law as now applied to motors on the highways. The advent of the motor gave a new diversion to village constables, who in this year began to abandon the systematic prosecution of cyclists for travelling at a speed greater than twelve miles an hour. Up to 1901, the cyclist had been the premier speed merchant. His mount had steadily evolved from the giddy old "ordinary," which really ought to have been called the "extraordinary," seeing that it gave a first-class rise in the world, and an unrivalled view of the surrounding country, if it did just chance to kick, which it persisted in doing very frequently. A small saddle perched above a five feet wheel was not the most secure of seats, and the nature of the departure from it was entirely decided by the loose stones or the well-directed cap of some youngster in hiding! In the year with which I am dealing the "ordinary" and the "bone-shaker" were frequently met on the roads, but the pneumatic tyred safety, with a free wheel and powerful brakes and variable gears, was the fairy of all conveyances. It was fashionable for Princesses to ride bicycles then, and huge crowds assembled to witness track racing, while doughty feats were performed in endurance and speed tests from Land's End to John o' Groat's. Old people marvelled at the speed and security of these wonderful mounts, produced with delightful elegance by many British firms. Ichabod! thy glory is departed. Motor pacing and motor racing had begun, and the hard limbed push pedallist found himself relegated to a minor place by noisy, smelly and ungainly motor-cars. The first motor fire engines were started, and then came motor bakeries, motor kitchens, even motor savings banks, and the passing of the horse, man's

faithful friend, was heralded in the rattle of the new traffic.

And "motor balloons" were attracting much attention, too. It was confidently declared that man could ride the air, in whatever direction he might choose, except on windy days! The solution was the motor balloon and in several countries desperate adventures were being made on structures weird and wonderful, such as the aviator of 1920 would shudder at. How well I recall interviewing the inventor of an aeroplane which he guaranteed to rise and to remain under control without an engine! Then, on October 19th, M. Santos Dumont startled us all by circling the Eiffel Tower in his navigable balloon. Many condemned such experiments as tempting Providence, but only by struggle and sacrifice does man conquer.

On December 16th I heard Lord Rosebery make his brilliant speech at Chesterfield, which he opened with the question, "Well, gentlemen, what do you think of it all?" He was in splendid form, and his silver voice positively rang out as the great orator of the nation analysed the political issues of the day, such as Education, Home Rule, our continental relations, and the controversy over the South African War. In the Budget of the year the Income Tax had gone up to 1s. 2d. in the pound and the fact was loudly deplored by all subject to income tax. Would they deplore a 1s. 2d. income tax now, I wonder?

CHAPTER V

Personal Observations—End of the South African War—Chivalrous Welcome to Boer Generals—The Japanese Treaty—The Continental Triple Alliance—Passive Resistance—The Coronation of King Edward—John Kensit's Wycliffe Preachers.

WHEN enjoying breakfast with an eye on the newspaper, did you ever fully realize that great tragedy often lies behind those little paragraphs tucked away in the lower half of pages? That lesson was deeply impressed upon me in those early years, when it was a frequent duty to accompany the Coroner to remote towns and villages, where a jury would be sworn in "to diligently inquire and a true presentment make of all such matters and things as shall be laid before you." Even the jury of twelve good men and true has gone now, except for cases of a grave character, but I wonder how many hundred juries I have seen extending the hand over the table to touch the Bible, and then "kiss the book," in token of sincerity. The British Constitution is based upon good citizenship, and a phase of junior and adult education that is sadly neglected in this country is the study of administrative government. The vast majority of people in this country do not understand the great structure of the jury system, of the magistracy, of the courts of justice from the Petty Sessions to the House of Lords, or even of municipal government. Many young people who are conscious of a need for greater

knowledge, and solicit adult education, take to philosophy and economics before they can spell, and they remain ignorant of the rudiments of citizenship until, it may be, they are elected to hold public office. Then suddenly a new world of responsibility opens before them, and England looks bigger, fairer, and more majestic than she did. That is why the agitator undergoes a mental expansion when he becomes an administrator. He sees so much that he never knew before. He sees men of wealth who might retire into luxury devoting all their days to public service. As guardians of the poor they are to be seen handing round the tobacco to aged workhouse inmates; as councillors they are immersed in street improvements and local developments; as members of an asylum board they visit the very tragic domicile of the insane; and as members of some Charity Committee they visit orphanages and romp with little fatherless bairns. This was how life opened out to me in those early years of this century, and I began to see how much good work is done quietly.

Of pomp and profligacy I saw something, too. There is an intimate contact between London and every part of the country, and occasionally it was my duty to go "up to town" at the behest of some county family or local squire to duly record for the local residents the splendours of a society wedding. On these functions, and on balls and dances at the country residence, money would be spent with profligacy. There was money for thousands of fairy lights, money for banks of exotic blooms, money for exquisite meals at the highest possible cost per head which could be lavished upon one night's appetite for food and drink. Glittering coronets would float about the ball-room, escorted by gentlemen in hunting pink and solemn black and white. There was money for the best continental band and as much money spent on a night's pleasure as

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would feast half the county. I always found that a description of these nights, including the consummate culinary work of the wonderful French chefs, was intensely popular. Factory girls and charwomen were particularly careful to study them and the great middle class made it a solemn duty to know all about them. I remember looking on at one such brilliant scene in a ballroom, and feeling impressed suddenly with the thought that the lives of all the princes and princesses of fairyland were but tawdry imitations of these young people, the climax of the ages, able to gratify every whim and wish. But I did not find happiness there, not always. I found that pleasure of the kind became a feverish cult all too often, and that in these stately homes of England where money pronounced itself from gilded furniture and even gilded wall-paper, there was a painful lack of contact with the real England which produced its wealth, fought its battles, and made the nation. The impression came strongly upon me that some of these lives were not only selfish but useless, and more than once I have driven away from such engagements in the darkness of night, quite grateful that by accident of birth my lot had not been cast in that artificial stratum called Society.

But while lessons of this kind were sinking into my plastic and fresh mind, and finding utterance only in my diary, national affairs were moving forward, and with these it was the duty of a newspaper office to maintain contact. Early in 1902 King Edward received a gift of £200,000, which he decided to devote to the relief of tuberculosis. This munificent gift, it was disclosed, came from Sir Ernest Cassel, and the cause to which it was devoted was one of the most urgent in the country. The great white plague has no right to exist in our healthy climate, and it only flourishes on the frightfully unhealthy conditions the nineteenth century imposed upon our great industrial

centres. Men, women and children, thousands of them every year were martyrs to this disease, and new hope and new determination and a new holy crusade were started by this gift. Palliatives like sanatoria will never eradicate consumption. It is in the very walls of bad houses, and dark streets reek with it. In Charles Dickens's day it was not at all the thing to take a house facing the sun, because that would cause furnishings and wall-paper to fade. In 1902 landlords charged sixpence more rent on the sunny side. That is the great human need—sunlight —in the workshop and the home and in leisure.

The Marquess Ito, of Japan, was in this country at the time, and discussion rapidly turned from sanatoria to the land of chrysanthemums. On January 30th of 1902, Lord Lansdowne and Baron (afterwards Viscount) Hayashi, signed a treaty between Great Britain and Japan, under which it was agreed that if either Power became involved in war with another nation, the other Power should remain neutral ; but if either of the contracting parties were attacked by more than one foreign nation, then the other Power should afford active help, making common cause against the enemy. This announcement aroused high controversy. It was both defended and denounced with vigour, and alleged reasons and motives were given in profusion. Before six months had passed the Triple Alliance was renewed between Italy, Austria and Germany. These treaties gave rise to speculation upon foreign affairs at a time when domestic politics caused keen party strife, notably in respect to the Education Bill. This measure, after passing through all its stages, led to that remarkable political demonstration known as passive resistance. Thousands of Nonconformists refused in the period 1903 to 1906, to pay that portion of the rate devoted to uphold religious and sectarian teaching of a character with which

they could not agree. Their goods and chattels were distrained upon in lieu of payment, and the articles seized were sold by auction to realize the rates. Some of these sales were lively in the extreme. At those I attended I saw auctioneers literally smothered with flour, and police helmets splashed with eggs. In common with many others, my father's home was distrained upon, but I was never an admirer either of the policy or of the "demonstration," as it was called.

That digression, however, has carried us beyond a period of far more important events, to which we must now return. On March 23rd of 1902 hopes of peace in South Africa rose high, as the Boer "Government" arrived at Pretoria under a flag of truce, expressing a desire to proceed under British escort to interview Mr. Steyn, President of the Orange Free State, as to arriving at terms of settlement. This was allowed, but British operations proceeded in the meantime, and on April 18th the Boer delegates left Pretoria to confer with delegates in the field. For the next few weeks indications became very obvious that the Boer resistance was over and that guerilla warfare was at last terminating in spasmodic surrender by the scattered forces. On May 14th large numbers of Boer leaders arrived at Pretoria on their way to Vereeniging, where they proposed to hold a general peace conference among themselves. This conference selected delegates to return to Pretoria to discuss a settlement with the British. They arrived on the 18th and included Messrs. Botha, Steyn, Delarey, De Wet, Schalk Burger, Beyers, Muller, Celliers and Hertzog. On the following day Lord Milner arrived in Pretoria to take part in the peace conference. There was now the utmost optimism as to an early and satisfactory peace, and on May 22nd, when the King and Queen opened the Royal Military Tournament, there was

a most fervent tone about the ovation which London accorded them. On May 31st the Boers concluded their conference at Vereeniging, which had included about 160 of them, and they came into Pretoria. At 10.30 p.m. that day they all signed the document of surrender, the terms of which were signed for Great Britain by Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener. The news of this settlement caused world-wide satisfaction, and there was rejoicing and bell ringing in every part of England. June 1st of 1902 will long be remembered by all who happened to be in London on that day. The war was said to have cost this country the lives of 1,072 officers and 20,870 men, and in money £222,974,000. A Viscounty was conferred upon Lord Kitchener, who was promoted to the rank of General at the same time. On June 5th the House of Commons marked the conclusion of war by passing resolutions of thanks to the Forces, and voting £50,000 to Viscount Kitchener for his services. On the following day it was reported that the Boers were surrendering their munitions and themselves, and that most amicable relations existed between the British and Boer forces. Those of us who have had experience with the British Tommy can visualize the heartiness of the exchange between the two sets of men. I can vividly recall the great thanksgiving services for the conclusion of peace, held on June 8th, the one at St. Paul's Cathedral being attended by the King and Queen, by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and by numerous guests who were assembling in this country for the impending Coronation. On June 11th Colonel Arthur Lynch, M.P. for Galway City, arrived in this country after service with the Boers, and he was at once arrested on a charge of high treason. He was tried at Bow Street, found guilty and sentenced, but was subsequently granted a free pardon. Lord Kitchener

telegraphed on June 17th that all the surrenders in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony were completed, and totalled 18,400. Their losses during the war were computed to be 3,700 killed or died of wounds, and 32,000 prisoners, of whom 700 died. It was impossible to compute their wounded with any accuracy. On July 12th Lord Kitchener arrived at Paddington, accompanied by General French, and as the two famous soldiers drove to St. James's Palace, they were enthusiastically cheered by enormous crowds. Bóth had added to their brilliant military reputations. It was on the day of their return that Mr. A. J. Balfour became Premier, in succession to Lord Salisbury. To conclude this rapid survey of the South African War it may be added that Generals Botha, de Wet, and Delarey and ex-President Steyn and his wife came to this country, were received by the King and Ministers, and were heartily cheered by the public. Londoners took particular interest in the elusive de Wet, whose exploits added to the gaiety of nations, even amid the tragedy of war. The British military leaders received the Freedom of the City of London and gifts of plate, and similar compliments by several provincial cities. On their triumphal tours I saw Lord Kitchener and Lord French. They presented a marked contrast in physique, Lord Kitchener being even taller than General Buller and of more proportionate build, while General French was scarcely taller than Lord Roberts, but slightly heavier.

The terms of peace provided for unconditional surrender, and absorption into the British Empire of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Certain liberal conditions accompanied this stipulation. The death penalty was not to be inflicted upon any Boers for fighting for their country, the Dutch language was to be used in the Law Courts when it was considered necessary, and an Imperial grant

and loans were conceded to enable the Boers to re-settle themselves in the devastated areas. Lord Kitchener congratulated the Boers on their gallant resistance and welcomed them as citizens of the British Empire. Four years later, when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman came into power, complete local autonomy was granted to the new Colonies, and they proved of valuable assistance in a greater trial destined to test the Empire ere many years had rolled.

But affairs at home were even more absorbing at the time than the settlement of the South African War. Peace had been celebrated on June 1st and afterwards all public interest turned upon the forthcoming Coronation of King Edward and Queen Alexandra. This important ceremony had been fixed for June 26th and festivities and celebrations were being arranged in all parts of the country. Many distinguished visitors had arrived from the Colonies and other countries for the occasion, and all arrangements had advanced to completion, when, on June 24th, great public consternation and profound regret were caused by the dramatic announcement that the King was very ill, and that the Coronation ceremony and festivities would be abandoned. The official bulletin to this effect was signed by Lord Lister, Sir Thomas Smith, Sir Francis H. Laking, Sir Thomas Barlow and Sir Frederick Treves. It stated that the King was suffering from perityphlitis, and the surgical operation necessary was immediately and successfully performed by Sir F. Treves. Throughout June 25th the environs of Buckingham Palace were visited by eager and anxious crowds, resorting there to read the bulletins posted as to the condition of the royal patient. On June 26th the list of Coronation honours was published, and the new Order of Merit instituted by the King received several additions. The bulletins were all distinctly favour-

able and by June 28th the King was pronounced out of danger. Many local committees were highly perplexed about events arranged for the 26th. The decorations were already up and processions, sports, bands, shows, illuminations and bonfires arranged for. Some few towns decided to carry on and to celebrate a function which they were confident would not be long adjourned. A large number modified their programmes and gave teas to young and old, but abandoned all other festivities. The majority cancelled all they could, and decided to rejoice when the Coronation was an actual event. In my district opinion was sorely divided, and thus it happened that on June 26th a prancing grey horse gaily bedecked took me along in a lengthy Coronation procession and on August 9th, the same horse, similarly caparisoned, and prancing more than ever, took me along with a second Coronation procession. Sunday, June 29th, was marked by services of intercession, and on the same day the King was removed to a couch for some hours. On July 3rd 500,000 poor people of London were entertained to dinner as the guests of the King, and the various metropolitan centres at which the huge catering task was accomplished were visited by the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duchess of Fife, Duke and Duchess of Connaught, Princess Christian, and other members of the Royal Family. The pleasure of these great gatherings was enhanced by the bulletin stating that the King was definitely out of danger. During July His Majesty was reported to be in excellent health, and to be gaining strength every day. By his command the Coronation was appointed to take place on Saturday, August 9th. The interval was spent by the King and Queen at Cowes. On August 8th, two days after the return to London, the King addressed a letter to his people in which he stated that he looked upon the Coronation as

one of the most important and solemn events of his life, and he expressed heartfelt appreciation for the deep sympathy which had been manifested towards him during the time his life was in imminent danger. There had been rehearsals of the procession to Westminster Abbey, and of the ceremony itself inside on August 4th and 5th and a "full dress" rehearsal on the 6th. The Coronation of King Edward and his Consort, Queen Alexandra, took place in Westminster Abbey on the 9th as arranged, the ceremony being marked by one of the most representative gatherings of every phase of British and Colonial public life. The route of the royal procession from Buckingham Palace was by way of the Mall, Horse Guards Parade and Parliament Street. After the historic ceremony, the King and Queen wore their crowns as they rode along Parliament Street, Whitehall, Trafalgar Square, Pall Mall, St. James's Street, Piccadilly and Constitution Hill. Along the whole of this route there were dense enthusiastic crowds, and after the return to the Palace there was tremendous cheering when Their Majesties appeared on the balcony in their robes and crowns. London and all the provincial centres were most brilliantly illuminated during the evening. Special commemorative services were held in all places of worship on the following day.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, had wisely used the advantage of the presence of many Colonial Premiers and representatives to hold a Colonial Conference, which opened on June 30th and concluded its sittings in November, when a statement of its business was published. They agreed that such conferences should be held every four years; that Colonial contributions towards the maintenance of the Navy should be increased, and—a subject which opened out a strenuous political campaign continued during the next ten years—that the principle

of preferential trade between Great Britain and the oversea Dominions would stimulate commercial intercourse. It was agreed that the metric system should be adopted as soon as possible, and that cheap postage should be effected throughout the Empire.

During recent years Mr. John Kensit and his Wycliffe preachers had caused great perturbation to a number of parish priests by protesting during services against forms of ritual to which they objected. Their speeches and acts of protest had led to acrimonious scenes in many parishes in various parts of England and on September 25th, at Birkenhead, Mr. John Kensit, who was a bookseller in Paternoster Row, was assaulted by roughs and seriously injured by a chisel which, thrown from the crowd, struck him on the head. He died on October 8th.

The latter part of the year was marked by a visit of the German Emperor, who was the guest of King Edward at Sandringham on November 9th, the King's birthday. He also visited the Earl of Lonsdale at Lowther Castle, and the Earl of Rosebery at Dalmeny House. During his tour in the North I well remember his hearty laughter as he strolled round an old world garden, arm in arm with the editor of a certain famous newspaper !

CHAPTER VI

Change of Scene—When Kings Travel—Days in the Dukeries —A Bold Baronet—Reporting Pit for Pat—The German Gypsies.

TIMES change, and we with time, and the year 1903 found me in a larger Midland town, with the Dukeries not far away. Perhaps life in a town of fifty thousand to a hundred thousand people is as amenable a life as any town can offer. In your very small town or village many abilities run to seed and even busy men go wrong for the want of occupation. More village schoolmasters commit *hara-kiri* than any other class of schoolmasters, and more village pastors cause consistory courts than any other pastors. A local factotum gets swelled head very rapidly in a village, and gets an impression that because he is monarch of all he surveys he is monarch of everything else.

Bigness in a mental sense is not derived from small surroundings, and there is more intolerance, gossip and sensation in the village than the city. Your teeming city affords that constant variety and contact which sharpens the wit and produces the mentally alert, widely tolerant and always interested crowd. But for these great advantages and amenities a price is paid in crowded houses, narrow streets and sunless alleys.

There is an artificiality about these conditions which divorces people from the soothing influence of the land ;

of the changing season in the country side. The medium size town has many advantages. It has a composite, communal life. It is not too big for you to get to know everybody who is anybody, nor too small to offer many of the amenities of city life. Its inhabitants are very house-proud, and every such town is the best, most progressive and most ancient town of its kind in this our realm.

Into such a town was I launched during 1903, with a big and constant run of varied engagements, travelling hither and thither to sip of the best over half a county. The next few years were full of activity and change, and a larger view of England unfolded before me. Near by was that extensive and richly wooded region known as the Dukeries, and I was soon to discover that this very beautiful region of Sherwood Forest was to produce more first-class stories than I expected. After a week of heavy nights it was exquisite to ride away into those glorious drives down to Welbeck or Thoresby or Clumber to see squirrels playing about in the sunlight, to gather wild roses or honeysuckle, or to see the wonderfully rich tints of autumn creep over the miles of woods. In spring, summer and autumn the Dukeries were feasts of colour and in the course of years of business and pleasure I became happily intimate with every road, drive and bypath. I knew the favourite haunts of the deer, and how best to reach the stately avenues of copper beeches, only excelled by those at Burnham and Versailles. Here, by the rose-covered porch of the village church, the great Sherwood Forest with its gnarled old oaks opens out dramatically to view, and one may wander on in peace unobserved, except by startled deer and squirrels and indignant pheasants and partridges. Linnets and goldfinches trill merrily in the gorse and furse bushes, and wild flowers grow in profusion Small wonder then that King Edward almost annually

visited the Dukeries to shoot or to attend Doncaster races, and on each occasion of these visits it was my duty for a week or so to chronicle the King's day. It was here I first saw a royal shoot and marvelled at the almost unfailing accuracy of the King's aim at birds high in the air. The precision of these shots by the King and some other members of the royal party was something to wonder at. There was, too, all the bustle and care involved in the travelling of the royal household. How often I have watched the movements of that venerable detective, Sir Patrick Quinn, as he moved about his precautions for the security of the royal train. Arrivals and departures of the King were familiar, and it was always very interesting to notice the minute arrangements involved by a royal visit. The royal train was a delightful thing, and the King's saloon was always supplied with the daily newspapers of the various parties for his personal examination. Several times I saw King Edward and Queen Alexandra on ceremonial visits, and again in the woods on days of pleasure and, most interesting of all, perhaps, at dances arranged in the ducal residence.

Hereabouts let me introduce the most unconventional member of Parliament I ever knew. He was very wealthy, being a great steel and coal-owner, and he lived in a considerable degree of luxury, but he was one of the most interesting, most natural and most fearless men I ever expect to meet. He was a baronet, too, and soon he will be recognized by hundreds who knew him in life, and remember that his death was as dramatic as his life. He called at my house one Sunday afternoon in August, a hot, bright day, and asked me to accompany him to a meeting. He was wearing a suit of white flannels, white sloucher hat, and white boots. Waiting for him was a carriage and pair of handsome black horses ; footman and coachman

on the box, and he, without a waistcoat, was going to address a brotherhood meeting !

It was his invariable and kindly practice to let me know when he was " going to say something " and one could always take him at his word ! It was he who was challenged to repeat outside the House of Commons a certain statement he had made inside, and at the first opportunity he did so, having widely announced the fact beforehand that he would do so. How well I recall that excited meeting, and the calm and deliberate manner in which the offending sentence was twice repeated, to make sure that they all got it distinctly. A libel action ensued and a verdict for £3,000 damages was returned. Into the merits of the statement we need not go, but the member certainly believed every word he said.

On another occasion he called for me with a huge yellow motor-car, and arrived at our meeting he launched a terrible indictment of a neighbouring town as the worst in England, and likened it to a Sodom and Gomorrah !

That night he drove me through an intense snowstorm to a central post office to wire his speech to the Press. It created a great sensation and most profound indignation in the town so exposed. He was publicly challenged to withdraw or prove his statement, and he accepted an invitation to visit the town and at a public meeting to prove or withdraw his statement. I shall never forget the intense excitement of that meeting. He proceeded to prove his statement by disclosing the most appalling figures as to drinking, and showed that for some time he had a complete staff of clerks in its licensed premises each Saturday night, checking all details and recording them in figures. He proved how many women were there with babies, how many adults sat or lay on the floors, how many had to be assisted home, and how many were prosecuted. No drama

could equal in interest the change of mood which swept over that great meeting. From anger it turned to surprise, to sensation, to absolute repentance, and as the member gave further figures of the hundreds who came to his doors for soup and dripping, it became ashamed.

He told of many threats of violence he had received, and told the miners that he feared none, because his knuckles were as hard as theirs ! These were more than human stories, for they were having an effect on the social life of England and I have good reason to believe those carefully collected figures had much to do with the later ban upon children entering licensed premises. I had personally seen some appalling tragedies of drinking amongst the miners of that district, and its regeneration began from that sensational night. I have mentioned that the death of this baronet was as unconventional as his life. He knew he was dying, and that a certain period of life remained to him, but he continued his public life, inside Parliament and outside, until the very day—one Saturday afternoon—that he was found dead in his chair.

Newspaper experiences are exceedingly varied. To be an efficient journalist one has to preserve a close contact with national politics, with the international temperature, and with local events. One night, after getting over the wires an important statement by a Minister, I met a police sergeant who was one of several in the force told off for a raid on poachers. I believe that miners and many other workers have an instinctive, natural and incurable love of hunting the wild, and that our game laws are unjustifiably harsh and narrow. They are redolent of the times in which they were framed, and many of our country squires would be happier men if they could forget the laws that preserve unto themselves every hare, rabbit and other ground game. I have seen hungry men with hungry

children sent to prison for poaching, and the poaching consisted of a couple of rabbits ! Once a police inspector in my presence offered a poacher £5 for his outfit. "No fear," he replied. "When my kids are hungry I'm fetching a rabbit—there's plenty."

Well, on this night of political excitement, I saw a joint raid of police and keepers upon poachers, and it proved a stiffer and more serious battle than either party had ever dreamed of. So soon as the forces of law and order broke from cover, shots rang out and flashes of fire came from guns. A policeman fell headlong, and the others continued the assault.

There was a fight with staves, truncheons and gunstocks, and out of that serious mêlée men on both sides emerged with broken arms and damaged heads. I made myself useful in a first-aid sense, very sorry to have seen such a battle over Nature's food supply. The police got high praise and deserved it. The men had long terms of imprisonment, but I am not so sure they fully deserved it.

The chairman of an Urban District Council rather offended me about this time. It was my custom to attend the monthly meetings of some half-dozen of these local authorities, and very happy our relations always were. One of these authorities had a chairman whose constant boast it was that he in his all greatness was a self-made man. He had, like Mr. Bounderby in *Hard Times*, none but himself to thank for the £80,000 or so to his credit at the bank. Generally he was most amicable, and even affable and he would generally start off at local gatherings by the remark, "Hi ham wondering why hi ham here." We regarded it as a kindness to touch this gentleman's speeches for him, and to interpret as closely as possible what we thought his ungrammatical expressions intended. But one night, rising in his place at the Council meeting,

he expressed a wish to say, by the leave of the Council, a few personal words. His eyes turned to me, and all other eyes turned to me, and I felt that fame was about to be thrust upon me. "I wish these 'ere gentlemen of the Press," he said, "and 'specially one gentleman of the Press, would just report what I ses, and not what they think I ought to say." This admonition and more was addressed to me, and late that night I told my governor of my disgruntled state. Subject to his approval I suggested a retort. It was to report that gentleman's chief speech exactly as he uttered it, and in quotation marks. My chief assented, and it appeared.

Now in life it is an invariable rule that if you say something unkindly critical about a person, you meet that person shortly after. So it was also with this chairman of the Council. The day following that unkind issue I was in his town again, in the centre of a huge sports crowd, gathered to enjoy the excitement of record-breaking cyclists.

And who should be making across the field from the grand stand to the Press table but my victim! This looked decidedly awkward, so one of my colleagues undertook to arm him off and explain that I was very busy. But nothing could dissuade him, and on he came. I sallied forth to meet him and he certainly looked happy enough. "My word," he exclaimed, "but you can report! You're a champion! It's pit for pat, every word I said, and thank you!"

Quaint and pretty old ceremonies survived through the centuries thereabouts. In one parish there was football for everybody on Shrove Tuesday. Early in the morning a football was kicked off in the market square by a leading citizen, and every citizen, young and old, of both sexes, followed the ball. The entire township formed one running crowd in pursuit of that elusive ball. All day long they

followed it, into the river and out again, and through the woods they had to go. Old residents came back once a year to join in the ancient game, and none were happy who had not secured at least one kick. The game would be talked about for half a year, and it had its valuable effect on the social intimacy and kindliness of everybody in that little town. In a village near by the Rogation days were marked by the blessing of the crops, and a picturesque and impressive ceremony I always thought it. For three days the vicar, his wardens and his choir, in surplices, would tour the parish, visiting every farm, encircling the fields, singing psalms and suitable hymns as they went.

The good farmer was thankful for the ceremony of Rogation, and always had refreshments ready when the procession reached the farm at last.

It was while I was here, too, that all the country was disturbed over the migration of a numerous caravan, described as the German Gypsies. The first experience I had with them was rather startling. Realizing something out of the ordinary, I cycled eastward to meet them, guided only by the published stories of their movements. Eventually I came upon this numerous colony of swarthy olive-faced nomads, making a study fit for a master to execute on canvas. Their vans were drawn up on the wide grassy borders on each side of the road and their horses were cropping the short grass. A group of men, in sloucher hats over their bronzed faces and with brass-studded belts around their drab clothes, sat round a fire on the grass. But the most disconcerting feature was the discovery of two large bears lying on the road-side, their shaggy coats full of dust and their beady little eyes set upon me. Without dismounting (for I seriously contemplated having to run for it) I shouted to the men, and pointed at the bears, upon which one of the men came lurching forward with a pole

and stood by the bears as I passed. But in the way of conversation or information there was "nothing doing." I didn't know Romany, and they professed not to know English, just as they did when they walked into butchers' shops, laid a big grimy hand upon a handsome leg of mutton, and tendered half a crown. I saw them several times later, when the police removed their wheels to prevent further advance, or restored their wheels and diverted them to a common. I noticed they possessed fleet dogs to catch hares, and well-spurred game cocks to catch pheasants, and knew that they knew a thing or two. But their coming and their going was a tragedy for them, and they always excited my sympathy.

The hostility they endured, the obvious signs of defensive along their route, were due more to ignorance than to causes, until the unhappy wanderers were driven to actual need, when they raided gardens for food and created hostility.

CHAPTER VII

Votes for Women—Adventures with the Suffragettes—"Magic Lantern's" Escape—Hilarious Scenes—A Golf Green Mystery Explained.

EXACTLY when the militant movement began to enforce equality of treatment between the sexes it would be difficult to tell. I have on my bookshelves several bound volumes of *The Freeholder*, *The Guardian* and sundry other two-hundred-year-old publications, bound in enduring leather, and printed in old English letterpress. In several numbers I find reference to the political influence of women and the methods by which they intend to extend that influence. Political clubs for women, drawing-room influence over a dish of tea, and other means were considered, and in the *Freeholder* of April 9, 1723, the genial editor remarks that previously political arguments have been applied like Hudibras' spur, which he applied to one side of his horse only, not doubting the other side would keep pace with it! Writers and politicians were reproved as being too ready to presume that women were but the garniture of a nation, the gentle accompaniment, solace and pleasure of that master of the universe, the Britisher. In good Queen Anne's time it was recognized that women handled many political questions, even woollen garments were patriotic institutions, for were they not home-spun? A cup of tea or coffee or chocolate was aromatic of the foreigner exploiting us, and a French waiter was a potential

spy. It was declared with anxiety that if the elevation of women were carried much further in England, we should have a mighty invasion of ladies from all the foreign courts, anxious to share the pleasures of this happy land. Petticoat government has been alleged against many a Cabinet to its profound annoyance but with some truth, and Milton carried us back to the Garden of Eden, when he makes Adam exclaim :—

> All higher knowledge in her presence falls degraded,
> Wisdom in discourse with her loses, discountenanced, and
> Like folly shows: Authority and reason on her wait.

I could quote many proofs of the recurrence of this demand. Each extension of the franchise during the nineteenth century raised it anew, and many distinguished women pointed at the anomaly of the ignorant labourer, without an idea beyond a spade and a pint pot, voting, while cultured and zealous women were denied a vote. Appeals to reason drew a large measure of agreement from the sterner sex that the claim was just and that something must be done about it. Still Governments came and went, until, in the first decade of the twentieth century, women adopted other methods, and the second decade had not completed its course ere the whole body politic abdicated, and the world of women was astounded at its rapid victory.

Reviewing the modern movement which culminated in the Representation of the People Act of 1918, we find that the first demonstration for enfranchisement of women was held in the Queen's Hall, on March 14, 1905, while Mr. Balfour was in office, and for the next eight years the holders of office at Westminster had the time of their lives. In the great election campaign of 1906, when the Liberals, led by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, secured such a notable victory, many candidates were heckled on this

question, and in numerous cases they promised their support. On April 25th Mr. Keir Hardie submitted a motion to the House of Commons for the enfranchisement of women and it was talked out! There was an immediate scene in the House of Commons, uproar developing in the Ladies' Gallery. Honourable members, perhaps conscience-stricken, gazed up in anguish at the now abolished grille, where they saw attendants removing ladies who still shouted protests as they vanished down the stairs. In December came a better organized repetition, and several women were convicted and sent to prison, as they refused to pay the fines or to recognize the Court, thereby deeply hurting the magisterial dignity. On February 9th of 1907 there was a great demonstration of suffragists outside Westminster Palace, and it led to riotous and turbulent scenes. Vast crowds of people assembled, and these crowds increased on such nights of demonstration until Trafalgar Square, Parliament Street, Whitehall and every approach to the House was blocked by the enormous gathering. On March 8th of 1907 a Bill to enfranchise women was talked out, followed by a great demonstration of protest on March 20th, at which there were seventy-six arrests, but none were sent to prison. In January of 1908 Mr. Haldane was severely heckled in Glasgow, and on the 17th Downing Street was veritably raided by an army of women, a number of whom were locked up. Their broad sashes and banners had become familiar when Mr. Asquith assumed office as Prime Minister in April of 1908. He, poor man, was destined to bear the full brunt of the feminine offensive for the next six years. There were several marches and demonstrations in June, and on the 21st it was estimated that 250,000 people had assembled in Hyde Park. On June 30th an attempt to present a petition to the Prime Minister led to further arrests and

the smashing of windows. Lady Astor was not the first lady to startle the House of Commons, for on the night of October 13th the precincts of the House were stormed by ladies. The avalanche was beyond the control of the guard, and one lady succeeded in entering the House itself, on the floor of which she raised the cry of "Votes for Women." This incident was very unsettling for those members occupying the green benches, but the majority were already outside watching the tide of battle between mounted police, exercising wonderful patience, and determined women exercising every faculty they possessed to achieve their object and to impress an indifferent Parliament. Mounted police were not allowed to impede them, and in a fracas of this sort I more than once saw educated but highly athletic young women throw horse and rider too. It was accomplished by the application of the subtle art of ju-jitsu to the equine world. A knee vigorously pressed into the horse's fore legs caused him to cross them, and the exertion of strength before he could regain his solid balance accomplished the fall. Often with hair and clothing disarranged they would continue the struggle against constantly increasing police posses, until the cooling influence of the hose-pipe relieved the pressure on the front ranks of the police. The horses were admirably handled in these difficult incidents at Westminster. They would push sideways at the solid block of people in the politest style, and tread in the gentlest "by your leave" manner on protruding boots. I should weary the reader were I to continue to enumerate all the dates memorable in the strife for women's suffrage. Their attitude certainly aroused animosity, and repeated declarations were made in Press and Parliament that they were impeding and even destroying their own cause by their actions. The *unco guid* of politics became exasperated as 1910 passed into

1911, and 1912 became 1913, and far from abatement, still the battle grew. Women emulated Houdini by chaining themselves to the grille in a manner which distracted the anxious attendants and obstructed Parliament. They went to prison gladly for the cause, and scores of them underwent all the nauseating agony of the hunger strike, a method which affected not only many a fair complexion, but shook sound constitutions.

Forcible feeding was a repulsive operation, disgusting to all concerned, and "The Cat and Mouse Act" under which invalided prisoners were released for a period, only to be re-arrested as soon as they were physically fit for another round, was a form of refined legislative cruelty. At many a political meeting in the campaigns of 1909 and 1910 provincial audiences made their first acquaintance with militant suffragettes. In all cases of front rank meetings, addressed by Cabinet Ministers or Front Opposition Bench members, special precautions were taken at the hall for a period up to twenty-four hours before the meeting. The Yeomen of the Guard do not search the vaults of the House more thoroughly than did police and hall-keepers search their halls at that time. All the resources of the Scarlet Pimpernel were outdone in this display of feminine ingenuity. During that campaign of which I have more to say elsewhere, I heard Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Haldane, Sir Edward Grey and other ministers, and at every meeting was "the voice." It floated into the hall as soon as the speech had begun, and disorder arose at once. It was reminiscent of the ventriloquial feats in *Valentine Vox*, and the search of stewards would finally locate it, sometimes in the false roof, where a girl would lie on a stout beam to call through a ceiling ventilator! Sometimes it was under the platform, and again it would hide in the organ. No sooner was the girl removed, generally

very dusty, sometimes positively black and very hungry, and no sooner was the cheering and laughter ended, than it began again and laughter rose higher as the searchers started out again. The handling some of these women received was not always of the gentlest, and more than one of them came precipitately down a back staircase. However, they never quailed, and raids on their headquarters failed to chill their ardour. If one fell out exhausted, fifty were ready to take her place.

Let me tell you now just a little of the adventures of one bright young suffragette during that period. You may have been very angry with her at the time, but it is over now and we can laugh together over those exploits. We will call this girl "Magic Lantern," and a bonny young thing she was. She was arrested on a dashing exploit, sentenced to imprisonment, and adopted the hunger strike. Ten days later the prison governor had to liberate her, on peril of losing her life. She was transferred very ill to the house of a friend, and around this house was drawn a cordon of detectives, for "Magic Lantern" was exceedingly elusive. Now, when very smart young detectives are constantly in contact with very smart young suffragettes, the law of England is not the only law operating, and official courtesies are apt to ripen into friendship. This may have conduced to some of the escapes that amazed the country, but the country can rest assured that not even Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson could vie with all the resources of the gentler sex. On a detestably dark night a trader's motor-car drew up at the back door of the house, and two detectives had a look at the errand boy who tapped at the door. Some one called "come in," and a basket of goods was emptied on the kitchen table. The door opened again, the errand boy emerged with the basket, and stepped into the car. The cordon opened out, and

away went the tradesman's delivery van. But that "boy" who came out in white overalls and cloth cap, with a basket on "his" arm, was "Magic Lantern"! While the police continued their watch she lay unconscious from weakness, but she was being whirled away into the country. Outside the town and waiting fully equipped for a long journey was a powerful touring car. To this "Magic Lantern" was transferred and the shop overalls were abandoned. Away sped the car, but the night was very dark, and thirty miles hence it ran into the ditch! Here was a hopeless plight for "Magic Lantern" and her friendly driver! Their united efforts could not get the car back to *terra firma*, and their discomfiture was made more complete by the sound of a heavy tread and the flash of a bull's-eye lantern!

"What yer doing here?" said this arm of the law.

"Can't you see," replied the driver, very anxious to keep the ray of the lantern off his companion. "Can't you see I've run the car into the ditch?"

"Been having a night out, I guess," said the constable. "A rum go this!"

"If you'd give a hand, constable, instead of hinting, we could soon have the car right."

"Righto!" The policeman laid tunic, belt and helmet on the grass, put his shoulders to the car, and their united efforts righted it! "Magic Lantern" was in and invisible immediately, and half-a-crown requited the policeman. While he was resuming the garb of the law and cogitating on the "rum go," the car was eating up miles.

But the police are very astute. Within a few hours a car was traversing the same road bent upon arrest. The quest was vain, for by a route devious and impossible to follow, "Magic Lantern" slept and rested in the fresh air while the Metropolis came nearer.

Soon afterwards she was arrested in another mêlée and again sentenced. Again, too, she underwent the hunger strike, and was released for her health's sake. Her resting place this time was an inland spa, a delightful little town, but there went the official cordon with the usual instruction to check every person who might enter or leave that house. Moreover, they had a car garaged close by, always ready for service. This was the state of affairs one evening when a most weird procession emerged from a fancy dress ball close by. They were all young people, advancing in couples, and all oddly garbed. They sang a war song as they approached the house under police observation. They passed in at the front and out at the back, and round the block and in at the front again. Here was a desperate situation for that handful of police! How could they possibly check who came in and who passed out? Certain it was that a young man who entered in a blue coat came out with a red one, and the man in the white hat emerged with a blue one. The variety of dress, the number of nurses, and other details, took some grasping. Another exasperating detail was that after each exit a couple fell out of the canter and strolled over the green. Still more distracting, a motor-car *sans* passenger, swept past. It was too obvious for anything. The garage doors swung open and away went the police car. It stuck to the leader all the way round the town, and round again and round still again. For two mortal hours these cars pursued each other, for are not the police orders adamant, and was not the order to keep that car in sight? After the two hours' joy ride the driver of the first pulled up at the premier hotel, lit a cigarette, and looked sublimely indignant when another car pulled up abruptly behind his, and a rude fellow jumped from it to watch who alighted from car No. 1. Alas! there was not a lass, for the police car was no sooner

engaged than "Magic Lantern" was gliding out of the town and towards London in another car. The reader will have seen long ago how easy it was for her to dance away with the rest, unwatched in spite of full knowledge that she was escaping. Nor was "Magic Lantern" again arrested.

After the triumph, and after the war, I look back now with a good deal of amusement upon those hilarious nights and days. Long after midnight I have been trying to follow over the telephone the exploits of these champions of their sex. I have seen them dislodged from dark cupboards, and from all manner of nooks and corners. I have seen them startle venerable magistrates during police court proceedings, and cause a look of holy terror to darken the faces of the famous statesmen of our time. They smashed the jewel case in the Tower of London with a hammer and in general "played steam" with the political machine. They dropped combustible chemicals into letter boxes and caused their contents to fire. They played havoc with golf greens all over England in a manner that positively bewildered stewards and detectives. In a night the greens would turn brown and burned, even when a policeman on the green knew that no living person had been near the green all night. This weird experience had become frequent before it was realized that the harm was done by golfers in the noon-day sunshine, who scattered a powder from minute casters, and then the dew of night completed the work! We were all wondering whatever would happen next, and even if the business of government would become impossible, when the war drums sounded and there was the marching of men. All know how the women behaved. A truce was called to all hostility, the ranks were closed and the militants became makers of munitions, became ministering angels to the wounded and

took their share in every war activity. Two years later I was passing through one of our largest military hospitals when I met a ward sister whose features seemed familiar. She recognized me too, and as I bent over the patient I had gone to see I remembered the brave days of old. We both smiled and said nothing.

Yes, they won the vote. They deserved it, they were worthy of it, they struggled for it and sacrificed for it, and received it with the gratitude of the nation to the Women of England. But Britishers do so like the opportunity of giving as a favour what they ought to concede as a right.

CHAPTER VIII

A National Diary: being a review of the perplexities of Public Men—The Dogger Bank Episode—The 1906 Election.

I HAVE lively recollections of two of us going over from the same office to Welbeck to report Mr. Joseph Chamberlain when he spoke in the Riding School there in his campaign for preferential tariffs. Two of us transcribed four columns by midnight that night and the linotype operators were on top of us all the time, carrying away every slip as it was written. Ever since the Colonial Conference, Mr. Chamberlain's view had become very clear, and on May 15th of 1903 he began his advocacy of import tariffs at a great demonstration in Birmingham. A few months later he resigned his seat in Mr. Balfour's Cabinet to devote himself to this campaign, around which for some years turned every election, and even yet every candidate for Parliamentary honours feels himself obliged to declare his attitude on this question. Mr. Chamberlain was a brilliant, dashing speaker, very confident and strikingly assertive in his manner. He had a practice of specializing upon the chief industry of the district in which he was speaking, and this afforded ample scope to Mr. Asquith's trenchant replies, when the latter followed on à tour of the country in reply. It was a great oratorical duel, and both views had strong support. Mr. Chamberlain was climbing uphill, as it were, against public opinion, and the

general elections of 1906 and 1910 gave a perfectly clear indication of popular feeling. They were most fervid meetings, and sometimes the cheering was so intense, so spontaneous, that the roar of it would recur in our sleep all night through. This was especially tiresome at times of frequent meetings with short intervals between them, until some of us positively dreamed Tariff Reform and Free Trade. I have sat between two telegraphists in the Post Office, producing copy to keep both of them going, with cheers reverberating through my mind in spasmodic crashes. Ireland and temporary issues like the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa added zest to the fray. There was, too, that extraordinary report, published in August of 1903, of the incompetence and muddle displayed in the management of the South African War. Well, every war is just a mass of blundering mismanagement. It arises out of mismanagement, it is backed by mismanaged enthusiasm, and exploited for gain by the mismanagers. Wars are as avoidable as strikes, but for a war all classes cheer until the bill comes home, and for a strike only the striker cheers.

There were momentary sensations which startled the country for a period out of its political prejudices, such, for example, as the self-inflicted death of that brilliant soldier, Sir Hector MacDonald, who, on his return journey from Ceylon, shot himself in Paris. This painful incident occurred on March 25, 1903, and it tragically terminated a career without precedent in the British Army, for this intrepid soldier was the first who had risen from the ranks to wear a general's plumes. There was the Moat Farm tragedy at Clavering, culminating in the sentence of death upon Dougal, four years after his terrible crime, all trace of which he had been so careful to obliterate. Again, profound interest was taken in the issue of a warrant for

Whitaker Wright, his arrest in New York, his trial and sentence to seven years' imprisonment for fraud by issuing false statements of his undertakings, and for excitement there was his death by poison within a few minutes of the sentence. All England was absorbed, too, in the Humbert safe episode, for when opened in Paris this rich depository of Madame, on which she had contracted extensive debts, was found to be empty. There were numerous after-war crimes of a domestic and local character, but above and beyond them all rolled the ceaseless tide of national and international affairs. The Prince and Princess of Wales rode across London in a tramcar from Westminster to Tooting, thereby inaugurating the L.C.C. electrical car service of to-day. There was much travelling of Royal Houses, the King being notably almost tireless in his exchange of visits to continental monarchs. No monarch could be so observant of these amenities as King Edward, for in succession he was in Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Madrid, and Lisbon. President Loubet came to England, thereby closing an era of suspicious comments about the two nations, and a few months later came the Anglo-French Convention.

Early in 1904 came the war between Russia and Japan as a sequel to recent friction, and this country signed a deed of neutrality which was severely tested in October by the Dogger Bank incident. This extraordinary outrage upon the defenceless fishing trawlers was committed on the night of October 21st by the Russian Baltic squadron, on its passage down the North Sea. The captain, in a fit of desperate nervousness, opened fire on the little fishing fleet. The *Crane* was sunk, her skipper and third hand being killed, and all on board were wounded. Other vessels were severely damaged and crews badly injured. The Russian Fleet calmly continued its course without reporting,

and nothing was known until the battered fishing boats put into Hull. The national indignation was most intense, and on October 28th Mr. Balfour, the Prime Minister, announced at Southampton that the Tsar and Russian Government had expressed profound regret, promised liberal compensation, and had detained the Fleet at Vigo for the return of the officers implicated. The Premier added that a joint inquiry would be held by representatives of nations under the Hague Convention. Next Admiral Rozhvestvensky, commander of the Baltic Fleet, claimed that he was attacked by Japanese torpedo boats, one of which he sank. So high did feeling run that the Home, Channel, and Mediterranean Fleets were ordered to "be in readiness to co-operate." A few months later, compensation of £65,000 was paid over by the Russian Ambassador, and Albert Medals were presented by the King to several of the men concerned.

Captain Scott with his vessel *The Discovery*, and other members of the Antarctic expedition, arrived at Spithead on September 10th, and a round of receptions and lectures began. Poor Scott a few years later died nobly, away in the great white regions which drew him as they draw the compass, but to that we shall make future reference. Religious revivals, Welsh and otherwise, were booming at the same period. The Torrey-Alexander Mission was running in London, and "Count your many blessings" became as familiar as any pantomime tag. Numerous war memorials were unveiled all over the country, taking divers forms, but the sentiment was the same, the perpetuation of the memory of those who had fallen in South Africa. Even while these valedictory speeches were being made, ex-President Kruger died in Switzerland and was conveyed to Pretoria for burial, the ceremony taking place there on December 16th of 1904. A notable event in February

of 1905 was the balloon journey from London to Paris in six hours, and on May 19th came the opening of that great triumph of engineering skill, the Simplon Tunnel, which had been started simultaneously from both ends, and excavation finished perfectly in the heart of the mountains on February 24th.

Mr. Balfour resigned office as Prime Minister on December 4th, and on the following day Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman became Prime Minister. The first month of 1906—why will they always have general elections in midwinter !—saw the election campaign in full swing. One of the early sensations was the defeat of Mr. Balfour in East Manchester, but Mr. Chamberlain and the other Unionist members received increased majorities in Birmingham. Mr. Brodrick was defeated at Guildford, Mr. Chaplin at Sleaford, and Mr. Walter Long at Bristol. The last result was announced on February 13th, the Liberal party being returned to power with a majority of 104 over all the other parties combined. It was a sweeping success, due in large measure to the reaction of the khaki wave of 1900, the fact that the Unionist Government had outstayed its welcome, and further in part to the personal qualities of the new Premier. This second Parliament of King Edward's reign elected Mr. James Lowther as Speaker, Mr. Speaker Gully having announced his intention to retire prior to the election. His Majesty formally opened Parliament on February 19th, and just as hope springs eternal in the human breast, so does a new programme from a new Parliament, but hopes and programmes are alike in one important respect : they do not anticipate the events of to-morrow and gang aft agley. Many a Government has been hoist on its unfulfilled pledges, although it has given valuable service in dealing with events as they arise. During this strenuous election

campaign of 1906 there appeared *The Tribune*, heralded with all kinds of novel advertising in London. It was a sort of Liberal *Daily Telegraph*, but lacking, unfortunately for its promoters, those pages heavy with advertising revenue, which only time and influence can erect. The dramatic story of its life and execution within twelve months has been extensively told, and I will only remark that the fluttering out of its brief life was more than a misfortune for the Liberals, and a very emphatic object-lesson to the public of the fact that the newspaper is a mighty and adventurous undertaking and that its success is in the hands of the advertiser rather than the public. The loss of *The Tribune* was keenly disappointing to journalists of all parties, for it had stepped immediately into the front rank of newspapers, and deserved a better fate.

The general election campaign had scarcely closed when Lord Roberts began to urge the great importance of a scheme of Imperial Defence, his mind steadily concentrating upon a National Service League, which in subsequent years he strenuously advocated. His advice was that every able-bodied male citizen should undergo compulsory military training in preparation for any national emergency. The veteran soldier probably knew much more than he ever publicly told of the great probability of such an emergency, but the only practical result of his advice was the establishment of voluntary leagues in nearly all centres, the members of which took regular shooting practice at the butts. The summer witnessed great scenes at Birmingham, in celebration of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's seventieth birthday.

The use of motor-cars had advanced so rapidly in the six years as to justify an investigation and report by a Parliamentary Committee. Speed had become a cult by road and rail, and an express train was run from Cardiff to

Newcastle in 8½ hours. Speed, however, has its disasters as well as its triumphs, and in the same summer there occurred two shocking railway disasters. On July 1st the American boat train came to grief at Salisbury, and as a result of the wreck 28 persons lost their lives and many were injured. The jury attributed this calamity to excessive speed. Then on September 19th an express from King's Cross left the rails at Grantham, and twelve persons were killed. The confusion and horror arising from the sudden overthrow of a heavy train can only be realized by those who have been on the scene of such a disaster. The wrecked vehicles, with their twisted axles and shredded timber, give an impression of awe, and a powerful locomotive battered to ruin conveys an idea of impact such as nothing else imparts. On one occasion I was able to assist injured passengers in an accident of lesser note, but I still recall the sense of pain at the discovery of the dead, and the instinctive impulse to keep quite a long way from trains for some time afterwards. When we consider that our highly organized express service depends so largely upon the human element, and that our main lines are still lacking automatic devices which would add enormously to safety, it is remarkable that these accidents are so few. If a medical man makes a mistake in a prescription he might kill one patient, but if an engine-driver or signalman makes a mistake, he may kill a score. And while discussing railways and railwaymen we might mention that it was in 1906 that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants decided to join forces with the political Labour party, a decision which culminated in the resignation of the secretary of that organization, Mr. Richard Bell, M.P., because he declined to obey the mandate of his members. The incident created a great deal of public discussion, but as causes are greater than individuals, the tide rolled on, and the N.U.R. of to-day is a vital element

in the Labour party. The outstanding controversy of the year, however, was the subject of demonstrations of dimensions great or small, in all parts of the country, for and against Compulsory Training.

The Channel Tunnel proposal was more seriously advocated than formerly, but it was adversely reported upon by military authorities, and made the basis of thrilling fiction as to the possibility of landing hostile forces at Dover for breakfast, and for a time the projected railway under the sea was abandoned.

SECTION TWO

A NATION IN FULL BLOOM

CHAPTER IX

In Arcady—The Ancient Town—Golden Marsh and Green Wold—An Idyll of Birds and Flowers—Colonial England—The Hiring Fair—The Annual Trek—Where Shepherds Lead their Flocks.

"HAVE you applied for the Lindsey job?" asked a colleague of mine as we were travelling together in the train one day in 1906. "No," I answered; "tell me about it." And thus it came about that I found myself at a railway carriage window one morning, and I was inside the carriage going away to pastures new, and on the platform were a group of good friends to see me off. It was a happy departure, and during the journey I contemplated the amenities of rural life, bought the *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, and became immersed in agriculture. When the train swept round that final curve which brought my future home into view, I was in a mood of enthusiasm about village life, with visions of rabbit shooting and of following the chase. I saw myself using a pony to follow the hunt when the week's work was over, and even making the pleasure profitable. Then the town, as I said, swept into view. It was just a cluster of red tiled buildings of brick and stone, gathering thickly around the most stately, the most graceful and exquisite church spire in this bonnie land. For six years and more I lived under the shadow of that marvellous piece of tapestry in stone, and every day I loved it, and my last glance from the train which bore me away from that peaceful town for

ever was to enjoy again and for as long as possible, those delicate and symmetrical proportions rising into the blue vault of heaven. I have seen that lofty steeple looking radiant with ghostly whiteness in the mist of summer nights, and seen it richly illuminated by moonlight, and in every degree of light it has a new beauty to reveal. Plenty of people would weary of the town were it not for the fascination of that spire which even Salisbury can scarcely equal. So my first study of grey and red was impressive, and I noticed an abundance of trees about. They intrude close around the station, and are visible from the main streets. Long may they flourish.

Just after my arrival the clock in the church struck twelve, so solemnly, so slowly, so deeply, that it gave me the pace, the speed register of the town at once. Try rushing there, and you are out of harmony with the civic tone, and become suspect. Here curfew is still rung, and the evening calm is real, for there are no glaring music-hall lights, and no rushing motors from the theatres. Here, most appropriately, Alfred Tennyson attended school for four years, and from his surroundings as much as his studies received that education which fitted him to become the great Victorian Laureate. Here his first published works saw the light of print also. Here the Lincolnshire Rebellion of 1536 began, to be followed by terrible retribution in executions at Tyburn and in the quaint and cobbled market-place. Here King John was a visitor, and he would therefore know the extensive and varied county far better than the stupid monarch Henry VIII, who described Lincolnshire as "the most brute and beastly county in this our realm, a county of flats, fogs, and fens." Indeed, I had the billiard-board impression of the county until I saw the steep and richly wooded hills of Lindsey, those rolling verdant wolds,

famed for giant red cattle and powerful shire horses. True, there is no Peak of Derbyshire here, no Wharfedale, no Sherwood Forest; no Lake District, but there is just a little of all, a glorious panorama of wood and field and farmstead, of rippling trout streams and sweet valleys, of golden marsh and green wold. Beyond the hills is England, the point of contact being Lincoln, whose Queen of Minsters kindly surveys this region nestling down by the sea. Along the whole belt of marsh, and into the hills, one traces the influence of Danish invasion by names, and even by physique. Nearly all the streets are "gates," and my streets were successively Westgate, Southgate, and Kidgate. We had also Upgate, Chequer-gate, Engine-gate, Northgate, Ramsgate and many gates which I fear have passed from memory now, but they all tell of Norse occupation. How strange it seems that in May of 1920 the names of these remote streets were made familiar to the world by a catastrophe unexampled in any English town. The poignant tragedy of *The Mill on the Floss* has been enacted on the grand scale, for an avalanche of water caused by a waterspout or cloud-burst destroyed twenty lives, and in its sweep through the centre of this ancient town, in which I sojourned awhile, it has wrecked houses and bridges and caused great devastation.

There was not only a Lincolnshire dialect, but a distinct vocabulary, especially applied to natural things. The weather was "hunch" one day and "owrey" another. In Yorkshire, Christmas is marked by spice cake, but here the particular delicacy was spiced beef, and succulent slices indeed they were. Old English customs still remain, and during the month of December, night by night, the band plays hymns and carols very quietly in the streets. At an interval a bandsman calls out in the night, "Good-evening, ladies and gentleman, it's eleven o'clock and a fine night."

We had no factory chimneys, no smoke of industry, and no dirt. The air was clean and crisp, fresh from the sea or the wolds, and people lived long. It was here I took unto myself a wife and rented a house : quite a manse, with a pleasant old-fashioned garden of fruit-trees and giant ferns and fuchsias and Solomon's Seal. Eggs were sixteen for a shilling, fresh from the farm, and I was passing rich on £3 a week. One could plant seeds, and hear the huntsmen's horns in the fields afar. The milk only travelled fifty yards from the byre to my door. The air was laden with the sweet scent of flowers, and the song of the birds filled the summer day. At dawn on a spring morning the chorus would be almost overwhelming, and as the sun rose, so did I, to greet the fair countryside almost at my door. We Britishers grumble much about our cold winds and rains and fogs, but we have yet the best climate Nature has to offer, with all the golden strands of the Indies included. We get a touch of all : a momentary wave of Arctic cold and a fleeting season of torrid heat. We acclimatize well, and therefore face the climate of any other land. When my apple-trees came into bloom, and I looked on their exquisite pink and white, I knew why Browning wished to be in England again, and why sentimental letters came from distant lands in May. In my garden I could watch the thrush moulding the lining of her nest with her speckled breast, and just up the road I could gather the pilewort—

> The first gilt thing
> That wears the trembling pearls of spring.

There were woods carpeted with daffodils and later with a countless number of lilies of the valley. I rejoice that every year since a basket of those fresh lilies has come to me. There were banks of violets, sweet smelling after

the sun had taken the dew from them, and banks of bright primroses of wondrous size. In all these things I rejoiced exceedingly and, like Lavengro, realized that the wind on the heath is good. There was constantly in the ear the musical tinkle of the gear of horses, and the lowing of cattle. In the pinewoods were numerous squirrels for company, and how merry it was to see them at play! There were lambs beyond number, and trout and kingfishers alike haunted the stream that rippled under the old stone bridge at the end of Westgate. The nightingale sang by night close to the centre of the town, and out in the country I heard and saw that great songster several times at high noon. Our foliage was not coated with dust of motors, but preserved its delicious green to the fall. Here the first swallows came, and soon I located a boiler-man who, on April 12th of every year, put down the first scraps of his dinner for the new arrivals. He expected them that day and was seldom disappointed. He was as delighted as a child when he heard the first twitter of the birds as they darted in at the open door and alighted full of trust in front of those hissing boilers. They had responded once again to the unfathomable call of England, a call which pulsates through the entire bird and fish kingdoms.

Those vast fields of grain ripening into harvest are unforgettable too. In the green stage, the myriads of ears stood erect, but as the sun bronzed the wheat and put the golden sheen on the barley and opened out the rustling oats, they all alike bowed their heads to their fate—the service of humanity. Anon came the great reaping machines, cutting and binding the sheaves. Until long after railway trains rushed through the country, sickle and flail survived in agriculture, and it is only in the last half-century that mechanical devices have been applied to the fields.

In the town itself an air of great peace prevailed. One could walk the whole length of certain streets without seeing a soul, and as this frequently happened I marvelled where the population would be on which to build a newspaper circulation, and whence an audience would be gathered to discuss public questions. In the main shopping streets one would count six people at once many times, but the general experience was one of silence. There was no dinner-time rush of employees, no train, and a motor horn brought tradesmen to their doors. There was no electricity, and thereby hangs a tale. The Corporation really wanted electricity and a Local Government Board Inquiry was promoted to secure a loan. But the inspector unkindly arrived on the previous day, and in the main hostelry that evening heard "The Corporation" discussing civic weaknesses that gave the show away. We had gas in most houses and a little in the streets, but not on those nights of the month when the moon was supposed to be on duty. On such nights the darkness was often inconvenient to such an uninitiated person as myself, and to visitors who came to see our retreat. Thus, one guest of mine, out one night to discover the post office, asked of some figure in the market square which building was the post office, but the dark figure in question returned no answer, for it was the parish pump. And another guest, colliding on the footpath one night, apologized instantly for the bump, only to discover that his courtesy was addressed to a lamp-post. As may well be imagined, it was a town of "characters" almost too numerous to describe. One of its leading citizens was prone to imbibe too much, and I met him in the dusk of one evening, wending his way towards home from his favourite haunt. He had had the great misfortune to drop his hat, and it was beyond his capacity to pick it up. He had therefore resorted to the

ingenious expedient of kicking it along before him ! On arrival at his home he opened wide the door, kicked his hat through, and followed solemnly after. The very quaintness of this district produced "copy," and what was not copy locally, the daily newspapers would wire requests for in full detail. Candlemas and Martinmas were real things here, and a fair was a serious business affecting everybody. The merry-go-rounds, menageries, and cinemas which arrived at such times were but the accompaniment to the stern business of the day, which was the hiring of farm servants. At these annual hiring fairs hundreds of men and maids hired themselves out for the year. There were recognized values for ploughmen, shepherds, horsemen, wagoners, dairymaids, domestic servants, and youths. When a bargain was made between master and man, there would be a slap of the hand, called a handshake, and the payment of a shilling, called a fastening penny. Then lads and lassies, their destiny settled for a year, repaired to the fair to make merry for the day. Most of the men wore for these high-days, holidays, and Sundays, suits of velvet corduroy resplendent with numerous pearl buttons. There would be twenty down each velvet legging, and a profusion of larger pearl buttons for jacket and waistcoat. The girls were generally bedecked with one or more of the brilliant artificial flowers and tinsel plumes sold in the fairs, and a crowd of thousands of them would patrol the streets for the whole day. These were the great days of the year for shopkeepers, and on the event of a fine or wet fair turned their prosperity for a year. Footpaths were lined with stalls, and every trader exhibited his best. Towards evening the great recessional began, for on every road would be seen a line of farmers' heavy wains, drawn by those huge shires, and occupied by the well-laden families who for the rest of the year would live quiet, uneventful,

unnoticed lives about the farmstead in some remote parish. Carriers' carts ambled along, their occupants keenly discussing the fair, the hiring of George or Jenny, and the bargains of the cheapjacks.

In these villages we had no black and silver hearses or mourning coaches for funerals. If a villager died, a great farmer's wain, drawn by two massive horses, bore the coffin to the peaceful little churchyard. There would be touches of black ribbon and laurels about the harvest wagon and the horses, and the mourners and neighbours followed afoot. If it was a yeoman farmer who had gone, four of his best horses would draw the wain, and as one watches these rural cortèges coming over the fields from the farm to the last resting-place, one realizes a simple dignity and grandeur not derived from the expensive pageantry of cities.

Many of these farmers carried responsibilities and risks far greater than business men in urban centres; with farms running to thousands of acres, and single fields containing up to 600 acres each, they had to think in big figures and to look carefully ahead. These farmers of Lindsey were masters of their craft, and the big men of the county were all men who specialized in something. Probably the heaviest and most productive shorthorn cattle are the Lincoln reds of ponderous frame. The biggest and most fleecy sheep are the Lincoln long wools, and the shire horses I have mentioned are on the way to rivalling the elephant in weight and strength. I have seen five hundred people sit down to lunch at a farm sale of pedigree stock, and the company will include buyers from all parts of the world. One sees £800 bid for a single sheep, two thousand for a dairy cow, and a like sum for a fine shire. Nor are these the only special features of the livestock reared in Lindsey. There are numerous stud farms for bloodstock and hunters, and here I saw hunters perfectly

trained to open gates with their mouths. The same care was devoted to crops, and all the thought and conversation of the region turned upon farming. All politics were viewed from the standpoint of the milk-pail, and I got the impression of being in a farmer's paradise, a happy hunting-ground for lovers of the soil and its yield. Even infants took their share in the feeding of poultry, pigs and calves, and the hoeing or gathering of potatoes. It was not an expansive life for these people ; there were no larger views, no need for daily newspapers except by those who held considerable farms and watched market prices, and there was no wide social life. Yet they were good people and kind, and rich farmers, country squires, and peasants alike knew how to extend hospitality to man and horse. The people of premier importance were the auctioneers, lawyers, and estate agents, for the largest employers were the shop-keepers.

This was Colonial England, far removed from the bustle and business of the Midlands, of Lancashire, and of the West Riding. Most of its residents had never seen London. Their favourite jokes were against the pitiable ignorance of townsmen who thought wheat grew up pea rods ! and that " turmits " grew on bushes !

Here one saw good shepherds, replete with smock and crook, and it was literally true that the sheep knew their voice and followed them. All our roads were gritty with the perpetual tread of flocks of sheep. Constantly one encountered large flocks following the lead of the shepherd, a dog, or sometimes two, bringing up the rear. The intelligence and training of these dogs was a never-ending source of wonder, and their patience was a marked characteristic. Yet when off duty they could prove a positive menace to the stranger whose arrival at the farm they might resent.

April 6th of each year was a most exciting and important day in the simple annals of the poor, for it was Leaving Day for the married workers : a sort of general post to pastures new. At the wayside cottage early in the morning one would see the good housewife weeping as she leaned against the door standing ajar, the key of which she was about to surrender to another. Fond associations were being severed by no desire of hers, and all her household goods had crossed the threshold to be loaded into an open farm wagon. Habitually astir by daylight, the great trek hither and thither across the marsh or from marsh to wold or vice versa, was in full swing before most townspeople have drawn their blinds to let in the morning sun. By noon the scanty furniture would be deposited in the new cottage, the good man of the house would report himself to his new master, and the children would be exploring the new locality. That was what a change of situation meant in those plains of peace, and it was only by such migration that the workers preserved their independence. The wage of £14 to £30 a year, according to physical value, was supplemented by a plot to till, a side of bacon or so many bags of "taats" for the year. Farmers too often made it their personal business to know the politics of their "hands," and while some were tolerant and forgiving, it was not always so. There were those who had a decided objection to housing Radicals, and as to a Socialist, he was almost unknown in the land. The consequence of becoming such a backslider was too great to contemplate. It was a great and curious land this of mine, in which there were sharp distinctions between (1) the parson and the squire, (2) the tenant farmers, and (3) the landless and dependent labourers. Political meetings in remote villages were often silent, expressionless gatherings, unless the politics were those of the parson and the squire, and then an air of

geniality would prevail, all labourers would be invited, and in all probability a rabbit-pie supper would be an added seduction. Freedom of thought is a priceless jewel, and the history of the freedom of thought is just a romance of triumph over persecution, but the light of this freedom has not come over my Arcady yet. I had to feel, while dwelling in this beautiful border of England, that more was thought of cattle than men, and that feudal serfdom, banished from the great populous heart of England, survives around its edges, whence it will eventually be cast into the sea near by.

CHAPTER X

Land, Air, and Sea Records—The Territorial Army—Old Age Pensions—Pageants and Exhibitions—Peace and Plenty—Mr. Asquith becomes Prime Minister—Talk of War—The Licensing Bill—Faith in Dreadnoughts—The European Chess-Board—The Grayson Incident.

THE period 1906 to 1910 was full of enterprise and achievement. Mankind was reaching out to new conquests in many directions, and every day was interesting. Marconi's system of wireless telegraphy was being steadily improved and developed and extended by an agreement with the British Government to girdle the Empire. There was nothing private about it, happily, and sound waves once cast upon the air were received and read by all installations within the range of the transmitter. Thus the "S.O.S." call of a ship in distress at sea was heard and responded to by ships of all nations on the water. Trade competition, jealousy and racial animosity, sank to their true insignificance when human life was in danger, and ships flying the flags of several countries would rush through the dark waters stirred by that only competition which can survive the supreme test—the competition to save others and to assist the distressed. Men were venturing into the air, placing reliance on navigable balloons and airships. In France, M. Clemenceau ascended with the war balloon, "Patrie," sailed over Paris, and circled the Eiffel Tower. In the same year, 1907, the British airship, "Nulli Secundus" ascended from Aldershot, travelled over London,

to the great amazement of that city, and alighted at the Crystal Palace, only to be badly damaged by a storm while at her moorings there. Count Zeppelin was persevering with his special craft over Lake Constance, and the Wellman airship set out on its most hazardous effort to reach the North Pole.

Nor was it in the air alone that records were being made. In the same summer the *Lusitania*, the world's largest liner at that time, left Liverpool on her first trip to New York. She made record journeys both out and home, her shortest time at sea being 4 days 18 hours. Little was it dreamed at that time that this famous vessel would subsequently figure in history for an infinitely tragic reason.

Motor-cars, too, were advancing rapidly in reliability, speed and elegance, and the Olympia Show of 1907 displayed a variety of design and power which indicated that England was taking a premier place in their manufacture. On June 30th S. F. Edge drove a car 1,581 miles inside the twenty-four hours at Brooklands, and I later saw him make a speed of 94 miles an hour in a shorter test. Pedal cyclists were endeavouring to retain a place in that era of record breaking, and one, A. E. Wills, performed the amazing feat of pedalling 60 miles in the hour behind motor pacing.

It was a time of beautiful civic pageants in many cities, and of brilliant exhibitions. There was national and even world-wide prosperity, and the spending power of money was at the highest point of the twentieth century. There was peace and sunshine, and a general disposition to jubilate because no international clouds darkened the sky. The attire appropriate to Lady Godiva in the Coventry pageant was one of the controversies of the season and in all respects 1907 was as daylight by comparison with the indescribable darkness of 1917. One of the piquant incidents that added

to the gaiety of nations was the theft of the Ascot Gold Cup while the races were proceeding. This audacious theft astounded those responsible for the safety of the trophy and it baffled all attempts at solution. This exploit was quickly followed by one of equal audacity at Dublin Castle, from which some thousands of pounds worth of jewellery and State regalia were extracted. Dublin Castle certainly has looked down upon more daring and desperate enterprises since that time, but the twentieth century story of Ireland is a story to itself, a story thrilling and wonderful, containing exploits and deeds of cool adventure beside which much historical romance pales into mere interest.

There was quite a storm of suspicion and nervousness over Army affairs during the year. In January Mr. (afterwards Lord) Haldane, laid a scheme for a national army before the House of Commons in a three hours' speech. It involved the dissolution of the militia and the volunteer forces and the creation of a newer, more efficient, better trained, but smaller Territorial Army. No modern Minister of War knew more than did Mr. Haldane of Continental conditions, and it was his duty to his post to design the best force possible so long as forces were necessary. It succeeded the Birrell Education Bill as the subject of general discussion, and military and civil opinions were alike divided. Sentiment and efficiency seemed to have clashed, but the proposal rolled on its way, and March 31st of 1908 saw the close of the old Volunteer Force. There were valedictory parades, reviews and torchlight marches in many towns, and appropriate speeches were delivered by mayors and aldermen. On that night I was standing by the mayor of a certain town at one of these ceremonies. Assembled in the square were all the red-coated "Saturday Afternoon Soldiers" as they had been called, and around them a large crowd of cheering people. An officer called

for the signal "Lights Out" as the bugle herald of the passing of the old force. Now the Mayor knew little of military signals, but he was most anxious to oblige and he was standing on the plinth just against the tap that controlled the lights of the square. What more natural, therefore, than that on hearing the captain call "Lights Out," he obligingly put them out! The entire scene was suddenly immersed in darkness, and the Mayor, hearing a suspicion of laughter in the ranks, asked very anxiously, "He meant these lights, didn't he?" On the morning of April 1st, the Territorial Force was in being, and those who feared it involved the wreckage of military efficiency soon received consolation in the delivery of real field guns for artillery, and rifles for infantry.

Another political subject of note which was ripening into maturity was the provision of Old Age Pensions. They had been strenuously advocated for many years, but every succeeding Chancellor evaded this problem. Quite early in the year 1907, a deputation of Liberal and Labour members waited upon the Prime Minister (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman) and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith), and received a very sympathetic reply. "I cannot make provision this year," said Mr. Asquith, "and it will be difficult next year, but in the following session I shall be able to introduce provision for such a scheme." There were those who feared it was evasion, there were those who decided it was another political get-out, others who felt heart-sickness from hope long deferred, and still some who believed this beneficent provision was entering the field at last.

Between the promise and the fulfilment, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman fell ill and resigned, and on the following day, April 6th of 1908, Mr. Asquith became Prime Minister. Lady Bannerman had passed away

since the triumph of 1906, and her distinguished husband did not long survive his retirement. At that time Mr. Lloyd George was engaged at the Board of Trade, coming into the limelight as a settler of industrial disputes, a notable example of 1907 being that on the railways.

The year 1908 was one of marked political importance and social unrest. In that year the continental menace was fanned a little stronger—for confirmation of which see the Year Books and Press—and in that year sites were chosen and plans and designs approved for the hospitals that were to receive our battered armies in the Great War. True, they were not called military hospitals but training colleges and the like, and the public did not know how the War Office chose the sites and made ready. The surprise to the public was the alacrity with which all peaceful uses terminated six years later, and the War Office took possession of its own to fulfil its own purposes.

The Old Age Pensions Act—a beneficent thing in meagre figures—passed its third reading in January of 1908 by 315 votes to 10, making provision of 5/- weekly to persons seventy years of age and over who had been British subjects for twenty years, had not been convicted of crime, and had not received poor law relief for twelve months. For the 572,000 poverty stricken veterans of the fray for whom this measure was framed there was a stipulation that no income exceeding £31 10s. per annum could come within the scope of assistance. From certain quarters came the terrible outcry about the colossal cost of this undertaking—£13,000,000 a year, about the pauperizing of the aged, and about the need for a contributory scheme to compel some years of thrift before payment was allowed. But St. Stephen's bowed to popular feeling, as the vote indicates, and on January 1st of the following year Old Age Pensions became payable at every post office.

There were other fruitful sources of discussion, notably the Licensing Bill, which proposed the gradual elimination of 30,000 licenses on a compensation basis levied on the trade. In its first form it was a fairly heroic measure, but vested interests battered it and mutilated it almost beyond recognition. "The Trade" demonstrated in every town, and the discovery of its secret power came as a revelation to many. However, after all the storm had subsided, there was a little step on the upward way to record. Contemporary with this storm over Britain's beverages, the coal-owners were protesting against the proposed eight hours' day for miners!

Armaments were also furiously debated, and the Dreadnought, the fast and all big-gun warship, was the fascination of the hour. Militarists felt the sudden inspiration that England's destiny rested upon Dreadnoughts, and thereafter came a ferevish competition between nations for the construction of Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts. Demands for the reduction of armaments and for a declaration of peaceful intent fell upon cold ears. Ever since the Balkan and Russian upheavals of 1905, there had been continually increasing discussion of the storm centres of Europe and in 1908 Europe was picturesquely described as a vast chess board with monarchs as pieces in the squares, and Foreign Ministers as the unseen players of a mystic game. Even during the discussion, King Edward, that much travelled monarch, made a continental tour in which he met the Tsar of all the Russias at Reval, the German Emperor, the Austrian Emperor, President Loubet of France and the Foreign Secretaries of Russia and France. Was he, I wonder, ever during his reign cognizant of the furtive correspondence proceeding at that time? Did he ever know about those extraordinary letters, only disclosed long after, between

"Willy" and "Nicky" and the secret imbroglios being fixed up during that summer, creating an entanglement of plot, counterplot, and distrust that must lead to disaster? Surely King Edward, the Peacemaker, did not know?

There was a note of unrest at home, too, and the percentage of unemployment, which had been steadily rising for some three years, caused agitation when it came to 9·4 per cent of the total working population. Labour's "Right to Work" Bill was introduced, placing responsibility on the State to find work for the vast army of unemployed. This agitation led to a dramatic and most unusual scene in the House of Commons, when Mr. Victor Grayson, the young and zealous Socialist member of Colne Valley, drew the attention of the House to this urgent problem. He was out of order, as he had been the previous night, and refusing to obey the order of Mr. Speaker he was removed from the House and suspended. The sight of this pale-faced young man being removed, abandoning in all probability his Parliamentary career, made a profound impression upon the House, and when the country learned of it next morning the impression was even deeper and wider. Attention had suddenly and effectively concentrated upon the hunger marches and the privation, and amongst the Parliamentary successes of these two decades Mr. Grayson must be accorded a place of honour.

There were subjects, too, of passing interest well worthy of mention here. On January 1st of 1908, the Offices of the Public Trustee had been opened to the public, and this useful State Department has enjoyed an ever increasing confidence and clientèle since. On September 16th Wilbur Wright ascended in a mechanically propelled aeroplane and succeeded in flying thirty miles in forty minutes.

This astounding performance thrilled the world, for it had proved the heavier than air machine to be practicable, and the aeroplane at once entered the British vocabulary. A British Army aeroplane was tried on October 14th, but not with such conspicuous success. For a time triumph lay with those intrepid brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, self-taught scientists living in Dayton, Ohio, who had designed an engine light and reliable enough to make flight possible. French and British aeronauts were struggling hard for the mastery of the air, and a period of progress chequered with tragedy was dawning. What British airman of 1920 would dare to cross the Channel on the Antoinette machine with which Latham gave an exhibition flight round Blackpool Tower in 1909, and actually assayed the Channel crossing, and nearly succeeded! In the summer of 1919, I saw the Antoinette in question tucked under one wing of a Kangaroo, with a giant Handley Page close by, and as one looked at that frail little propeller with blades like metal paddles for a canoe, its feeble wings, its limbering engine and ill-shapen body, one shuddered at the daring of the man who entrusted his life to its keeping.

The Druce claimant case concerning the title and estates of the Duke of Portland was heard, and to establish or disprove certain evidence the Court ordered the grave of Thomas Druce to be opened at Highgate Cemetery. One witness was later sentenced to four years' imprisonment for perjury during the trial and the claim was not established.

In that year the Labour Party Conference decided for Socialism by a card vote of 514,000 to 469,900. Miss Florence Nightingale, greatest of all war nurses, was presented with the Freedom of the City of London, but was too aged and infirm to receive the honour personally. In

that year lights on vehicles became compulsory by night, and in that year too, the white roads of old England began to vanish under the hard surface of tar macadam. We had definitely entered the era of turbine engines, motors, petrol and mechanical service in general.

CHAPTER XI

The Land Song—Days with Lloyd George—Two Stormy Elections—Adventures on the Road—A Political Drama—Lords and Commons.

MANY a great victory has been secured on the inspiration of a song. The Roundheads sang and caused the Royalist hosts to tremble ; Hus and his flock sang undaunted by the Pope and all the Austrian cavalry. The American Northern army marched to victory singing :

> John Brown's body lies moulding in the dust,
> *But his soul goes marching on.*

Dante stirred the spirit of Italy to lofty heights, and in France the "Marseillaise" evoked a veritable frenzy of zeal. The poems of Charles Wesley did as much as the sermons of his brother John to found Methodism, and the British import duties on corn were abolished as much by the Corn Law rhymes as by Sir Robert Peel. One can survey the whole world of poetic inspiration from the Book of Job down to Masefield and even to "Tipperary" and the test holds good. Good poetry is not simply prose crystallized ; it is something far loftier than mere rhyme ; it is a glorious inspiration for good. Its riches colour the dullest lives, and the world's best gifts are not excluded by low wages, nor yielded to the richest profiteer. Song only breaks from emancipated souls, and its effect is to

elevate countless people out of the dull plane of life for a period. The disgruntlement of the twentieth century will not be allayed either by direct action for conquest, or by suppression of restlessness by armed force. We shall not be ourselves again until the war-tried nations get back to better ways and realize that Tennyson and Wordsworth were greater than Wellington and Gordon ; that Burns and Goldsmith were as pearls beside the forgotten military leaders of their day. There is more inspiration in Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee* than in whole libraries of alleged romances of militarism. So long as we are too busy with the traffic of the day to cut through and resort awhile to the good society of great thinkers and writers, just so long will there be something rotten in the state of Denmark, and will our newspapers be morbid chronicles of trouble, with racing tips for diversion.

This little dissertation is provoked by the remembrance that in 1909 there were signs of inspiration amongst the people, and the dry bones in the valley were knitting together. There came a clash between Lords and Commons, and the popular will was decidedly in favour of curtailing the veto of the Lords. Another great issue precipitated that year related to land monopoly. It was a year in which Liberalism looked like justifying itself and accomplishing great purposes. All over England people sang "The Land Song" with fervour, and the refrain "God gave the Land for the People" was familiar as well as true. New notes of challenge were sounding, and there was every prospect that if only that viper which leaves its slime on all it touches —militarism—could be kept off the track, life was going to be worth living. But we had Lord Charles Beresford and Earl Roberts stumping the country, drawing attention off national affairs to a suspicion of what was happening across the North Sea. Still, throughout 1909 and 1910

attention was most closely focused on home affairs and the proposal to tax land values and to abolish the veto of the House of Lords evoked a political storm well worth participating in. Catering for a district in which the land was of supreme and direct importance, and in which party feeling ran very high indeed, I soon saw signs of strife. Now our member was a formidable person, held in high esteem by Methodism for good and sufficient reasons, and revered by Liberals for his long and stalwart advocacy of their cause. He was a railway magnate and possessed great wealth; he was a Parliamentary lawyer of profound experience, and a man whose word was his bond. His interests were vast and manifold, and touched several countries. Finally, he was a baronet, a forceful speaker and possessed a name almost to conjure with. Despite all his activities, he found time to write me scores of intimate and kindly letters, and when he was touring his constituency, the close contact developed an esteem on my part which survived all that followed and continues yet.

Well, this great man came down to deliver his views on the land question, bringing his own carriage and pair with his special train. A few hours before the meeting he sent for me, and over lunch gave me the notes of his speech. This was the first sentence :—

"The Liberal Government is marching to disaster as certainly as Napoleon marched to Waterloo!"

I had heard rumours, but this instantly confirmed the worst fears of desertion from the Party. There was a crowded meeting that night, and I wired a thousand words to thirty newspapers. The sensation of this defection "took" of course, but it caused me great sorrow to send it. Our next night's meeting was at a village on the wolds, and early in the afternoon I drove out there for tea. It was the time of wild roses and honeysuckle and the world

was sweet, but for its political turmoil. As I drove my horse into the inn yard, the groom remarked, "His lordship wants you, waiting for tea."

I found "his lordship" in the best room of the inn, awaiting tea. He was very kind to me, but concerned that I differed from his views. Tea without an appetite is a cold business, and after an exchange of views diametrically opposed, I left the inn to walk in the cool of evening among the roses. Shortly afterwards the member joined me there. "There is still time to save the situation," I urged. "Go all out for the House of Lords to-night and put heart into the people. Make some strong declaration for democracy, for all our sakes."

But it was of no avail.

The schoolroom rapidly filled for the evening meeting, and this was how that dear old chairman opened, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have in my hand this morning's *Daily Mail* (and how those hands trembled with emotion). It was ever a liar (loud cheers) and surely it lies to-day (louder cheers). It says here that our member says the Liberal Government is marching to——but I canna' say more. I call upon our member" (subdued cheers).

Our member, obviously feeling acutely the sadness of this parting of the ways, emphasized his views of the previous night, and protested against the Budget in trenchant terms. The *Daily Mail* was right. The meeting sadly terminated, and the member turned to me.

"You may be right," he said, "but I cannot help saying what I feel. I understand I have a deep ford to cross to-night, and my driver is not used to this country. Is it difficult?"

"If you will allow me," I said, "I will see you across, and my horse is all right."

"On no account," he replied, "but if you would be

so kind as to drive your horse in advance over the ford, and just put your lights on it for my driver to see his way, I should be very grateful."

This I did, and the ford being safely crossed our member for seventeen years alighted to say good-night.

"I feel curiously depressed, to-night," he said. "I understand this ford is the boundary of my division?"

"Yes, sir," I replied, "and I feel acutely depressed. I have an idea we have had our last campaign together."

So, indeed, it proved, for a deputation speedily journeyed to London, and in that beautiful town-house suggested resignation. Our member had committed political self-destruction, and his political strength of a dozen years ago is forgotten. Time, however, heals many grievances, and some years later the freedom of the town whose name the division carries was presented in recognition of many services, and the member's portrait in oils hangs in the Town Hall. A biting cartoon in the *Daily Chronicle* hit off this dramatic episode, and I keep it, sharp as it is, along with many estimable letters.

In our villages telegrams were regarded as missives of horror. A telegram represented tragedy, and I did not realize this fully until one day I sent a telegram to a labourer in the marsh to let me see a letter he had received from a famous politician. Why such an important document should have been addressed to him possibly even the writer himself could not explain, the only important fact being an intimation to me that such a letter had been sent. Well, two hours after sending the telegram I heard the clatter of a galloping horse in the street, and it halted abruptly at my office. The heavy tread of some one panting was heard on the stairs, and an exhausted and excited man tossed a letter on to my table.

"That's it," he panted, "but don't ever send me a

telegram again. Us folks don't like them things. Keep the letter. I haven't read it and don't want it." Millions of people read that important letter next day.

There was a heavy storm at sea one night and I was driving towards the coast to attend a political meeting of phenomenal interest. My faithful horse could not make progress against that sand-laden gale and I was decidedly late. Approaching this remote village, and passing the important proclamation that "London papers can be obtained here at noon," I noticed a man in the road. Forming a megaphone with his hands he shouted "Drive straight to the meeting, they're waiting."

"They must wait," I answered, as I pulled up. "You come up here. I am going to see my horse safely in, and to get some peppermint before I see the meeting."

The poor man seemed astounded. "But the chief speaker's waiting for you," he exclaimed.

"They really must wait," I had to answer.

Anon we entered that densely packed schoolroom to discover a minister of religion talking against time. At our entrance he collapsed suddenly, and the speaker took possession. The politics of the night were largely local but exciting to all present. A poor man died of heart failure ere the close of that trenchant speech. This painful incident brought the meeting to a hasty conclusion, and in the confusion I heard rockets being fired for the lifeboat, and instantly political sentiments were obscured by great anguish over a vessel in distress on such a night. Already it was aground on those gentle sands where children delight to play, and by morning it was dashed to pieces by the waves. I mention it because of the instant transition from political animosity to the close bond of humanity, all anxious to do something for those in peril on that awful night.

The next candidate held views in absolute harmony with the labourers of the division. He would tax land values and curb the power of the House of Lords, and away went the new campaign with gusto.

Mr. Lloyd George came down, a visit which Tory landlordism strongly resented, and the scenes of that night will ever be memorable. It was impossible for the Chancellor, as he then was, to address an overflow meeting, on account of the menacing crowd. Many windows were smashed, and many eggs, tomatoes, fish-heads and potatoes spattered on to the blinds and the walls. In the streets outside a large force of police had to use their batons freely, and the sound of cracking heads was sickening. There were cordons of police inside the hall and outside the hall, and I wrote my telegrams in an ante-room with the Chancellor. He was got safely away by a clever ruse, but ere the little one-horse cab had proceeded a hundred yards half a dozen men sprang at it. One seized the horse's head and others pushed at the side of the rapidly moving cab. Its near wheels had risen from the ground when a police sergeant dashed into the road, and there was a rapid crack, crack of the baton. Two or three men fell and others bolted, and I found the sergeant lying prostrate in the road. As I unhooked the neck-band of his tunic he rallied and said "Thank God it's you, I thought they'd got me."

Towards midnight an incensed crowd raised a cry to burn a certain house where they suspected the Chancellor of being. He was in fact there, and an attempt at arson would have been made had not an esteemed political friend of theirs declared vehemently that the Chancellor was already in the night mail! There was much guerilla warfare, too, for large numbers of men carried batons, and sanguinary conflicts took place with the police by night.

I was with Mr. Lloyd George again on the night the election of January 1910 opened, and I asked for his forecast. "You can say with confidence that the Government will be returned," he said. "What Leeds and Bradford do to-day all England will do to-morrow, but notably in the industrial North." Again I saw him escorted by a torchlight procession on the eve of the December election, and attended two meetings of his on the following day. What fervid and crowded meetings they were! How deeply stirred were the people, and how resentful were all the powers of landlordism. I saw him lionized in London as I had seen him lionized in his own division, and again in a certain drawing-room I talked with him afterwards of those lively times, over which he laughed heartily. Then his ardour cooled and a distinct Chamberlain tendency revealed itself. I saw him as Prime Minister addressing a huge crowd of war profiteers in the West Riding, and the people were outside to see him pass. He had taken a place as one of the world's pre-eminent men and 1919 saw him lionized by all the forces of reaction. He was the ally of Clemenceau, the curb on President Wilson, the friend of monopoly. The Press had ceased to sling Limehouse at him, but sang fulsome praises of this darling of the gods, their buttress against revolution. But, Mr. Lloyd George, are you quite so happy in the counsels of the great, the doyen of capital, as you were in 1909, when buffeted, abused, and attacked, you led the hope of the people, and toiled up-hill? Have you not turned down the easy track, and missed the mountain-top? I fancy you have.

There now; this "Welsh Wizard" has trailed me off for a decade. Let us hark back to our election campaign, during which it was strongly impressed upon me by political agents and speakers to emphasize the fact that the

ballot is secret. One would think it so unnecessary, yet every canvasser implored electors to believe it, and were not always believed.

"You say so," said one labourer, "but the last thing our gaffer said to me was this: 'I shall be at the count, remember,' and besides, why do we give our names when we go in to vote?"

No, many of them still decline to believe that the ballot is secret.

In that campaign we had our motor cushions ripped open by knives, we had ropes fastened obliquely across the road to bring us down; we had cars rendered useless by the cutting of wires; and we were stoned and showered with gravel as we sped along country roads. After one very trying adventure of this sort I returned home at 1 a.m. to find my wife weeping in the street outside, overjoyed to hear the motor again. She had received an anonymous letter during my absence from "The Black Hand Gang" declaring that her husband was on his last journey, and would be carried home in the morning! I had that letter traced down to a coterie of women! The ringleader was punished for it, but not publicly. There were adventures not due to animosity: adventures with horses and motors, our substitutes for trains.

An election involves a count, and it fell to me in collaboration with the police to work the little oracle that brought the successful candidate to the count, despite the awkward mood of the opposition. The count over, the member and his good wife, who had helped so devotedly, stepped on to the balcony to return thanks, when a stone struck the lady's right eye with most serious effect. The victor was escorted by the police through that surging crowd much like a prisoner is escorted out of a wild Saturday night scene. The vanquished was drawn in an open

carriage by cheering crowds, gaily bedecked, with pink. But he, too, has gone to his long home.

Still, the Budget went through, even through the House of Lords. And after all it was not much to fight about, was it?

CHAPTER XII

Great Political Issues—The Budget Rejected—Lords *v.* Commons—A Constitutional Crisis—The Parliament Bill—Direct or Political Action.

BUT it would hardly do to dismiss so lightly, with just a story of personal reminiscence, a period of such great importance ; involving as it did questions which are not yet settled and struggles which must be repeated. There was a very great disturbance of the waters during the years 1909 and 1910 and it was by no means confined to the land. It embraced the entire social outlook, and was largely based on the struggle for improving the condition of the people. In the world of christian religion, the Rev. R. J. Campbell's "New Theology" was creating a flutter in the ecclesiastical dovecots, and large audiences flocked to hear him speak or preach. Mr. Campbell enjoyed, and I hope may long enjoy, a generous measure of that factor described as personal magnetism. His large, brilliant eyes, wonderfully open face and general bearing of dignified seriousness, impressed all who saw and heard him. His voice was of that supreme quality which vast audiences could hear clearly without any approach to shouting, and his message was of a nature to open wide the flood gates of inquiry and thought. Christian Science, the discovery and faith of Mary Baker Eddy, was evoking ridicule and winning adherents continually, and that absorbing study in introspection, Psycho-Analysis, was entering the field

as a healing power for mental distress. In the dramatic and art world the censorship, and the autocracy of the absolute veto upon plays, was being strongly resented. Mr. W. Willett had submitted his Daylight Saving Bill to confer the benefit of an hour's extra sunshine upon the people during summer days, but the people again proved the fact that they dislike the intrusion of new ideas, and Mr. Willett's measure waited outside the door. I was in correspondence with him during this period, but this benefactor of all workers had gone to his long home ere the need for economy forced, not simply our indifferent country but all Europe, to adopt his simple and effective method of harmonizing our hours with the seasons. Syndicalism was being breathed across the continent, and in England the long forsaken need for Town-Planning was at last forcing itself to the front. It was therefore a great time, in which it was good to be alive and to bear a part.

Over all other subjects, however, towered that of the new eagerness in political matters. The Budget of 1909, introduced by Mr. Lloyd George, proposed to tax land values, license values, and other socially created values. This was a new principle in taxation, which had been based upon individualism through a long succession of Chancellors like Harcourt, Gladstone, Peel, Huskisson and even Pitt. The new principle was a response to the ever-increasing realization of some grotesque anomalies of landlordism, and to the pressure of the Labour party and the disciples of Henry George to make land monopolists pay for their privilege. The land values duties were in themselves trivial and fanciful, but it was the principle that brought resistance, and dukes were as conspicuously to the fore then as they were a decade later in the controversy over mineral royalties. Briefly stated, the land duties proposed were (1) Increment duty ; (2) Leasehold

reversion duty ; (3) Undeveloped land duty. A second Doomsday Book was involved in the proposed survey and valuation of all land and it was proposed that half the yield should be devoted to relief of local taxation. The Chancellor's task was to provide a revenue of £164,152,000, which involved the raising of an extra sixteen millions in taxation, and a nation which ten years later was to think in terms of thousands of millions shuddered at this terrible sum. How well I recall the laughter in the House of Commons when Mr. Philip Snowden said he hoped to see a Chancellor having the courage to bring forward a Budget for three or four hundred millions. The crowded House was positively hilarious over such a joke ! The Budget was introduced in April, and a perfect crescendo of abuse fell upon it. It was re-cast in July, and 250 Government amendments to its proposals appeared on the Paper ! Times change, and now that "F. E." has become Lord Chancellor, with Mr. Lloyd George as Prime Minister, it is interesting to recall how Mr. F. E. Smith of 1909 wrote of Mr. Lloyd George :—

"It is true that Mr. Lloyd George, with that effrontery with which he conceals a lack of statesmanship, gravely assured his Newcastle audience that the Cabinet had spent weeks, even months, in the preparation of every detail. But if you put a frivolous mob-orator at the Exchequer you must expect," etc., etc.

The opposition was determined, even tempestuous, and it was marked by very subtle reasoning. It admitted that an overwhelming case could be made out for municipal taxation of undeveloped land and that it was absurd for a local authority to levy rates on purely agricultural value and pay anything up to 250 years' purchase if it desired to acquire the land. But the Budget which opened the way to putting these anomalies right was stoutly resisted.

The Chancellor's "mob-orator" speech at Limehouse on July 30th shocked all polite circles of the Opposition into crocodile tears, and Mr. Alexander Ure, Lord Advocate of Scotland, was held up to daily contempt for his championing of the cause. Mr. E. G. Hemmerde, K.C., waxed brilliant on the theme, and even succeeded in hammering it into the heads of farmers that this principle meant relief for them. I well recall going to a meeting with him during the height of this controversy, when for some minutes his audience refused to hear a word, but continued loudly to boo. At last the astute young politician got a few words in, "I knew quite well that I was coming to an agricultural constituency" he said, "but I never expected to hear cows in the Town Hall." A roar of laughter followed and the audience suffered him gladly. Liberalism had very badly let down the land question during the Cobden and Bright campaign to terminate the corn duties. There was promise at that time of free trade being carried to its logical conclusion, the freedom to trade without the imposition of ever-increasing rents to squeeze dry the efforts of farmer and shopkeeper alike. The controversy I am now dealing with, ignited by the Budget of 1909, again gave promise of the land question being settled, and until it is settled this country must be saddled with subsidies to farmers, or the alternative of high prices for food and the eventual import tariff.

Form IV caused more uproar than all the registration forms of the war period, because it touched money and not men. It was a first revelation of Mr. Lloyd George's penchant for forms, and other indications followed in the National Health Insurance Forms, The Labour Exchange Forms, and a vast cloud of war forms and papers too numerous even to count. We entered the "fill up a form" style of negotiation in that year.

The much revised Budget was read a third time in the House of Commons on November 4th and on November 16th Lord Lansdowne gave notice of motion to reject the measure. This he moved in a trenchant and effective speech on November 30th and the rejection was carried by 350 votes to 75. A constitutional crisis of great magnitude had thus developed, and on December 2nd Mr. Asquith in a crowded and excited House of Commons moved a resolution declaring that the action of the House of Lords was a breach of the Constitution. This was carried by 349 votes to 134, and at Plymouth on the following day Lord Lansdowne defended the action of the Peers vigorously. By way of retort Mr. Lloyd George declared that he would not remain a member of a Liberal Cabinet unless it had power to pass progressive measures in a single Parliament. This issue caused politics for a time to transcend even racing in popular interest. Large demonstrations and mass meetings were held all over the country, as the issue had to be taken to the people for a verdict. At Criccieth I saw Mr. Lloyd George received by his own constituents with such warm fervour as I have never seen equalled by any audience. It was under the tremendous pressure of this campaign that he burst into tears. I saw special correspondents of the London Conservative Press stand on their chairs to cheer the Chancellor as he came to the platform at the vital meetings of that period. I saw audiences in almost a frenzy of enthusiasm, and saw the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons applauding when Mr. Asquith, in clear, calm terms, issued the ultimatum to the Peers. Liberalism counted for something then. The election campaign was concluded on February 9, 1910, having commenced on January 14th and the Government was returned with a majority of 124. Shortly after the House had re-assembled, Mr. Asquith

announced his intention to put forward resolutions on the question of the veto of the other House. The first, respecting Money Bills, was carried by 339 votes to 237. On April 27th the Finance Bill came in, a year delayed, and it was carried by 324 votes to 231, being again ready for submission to the Peers.

Within a few days King Edward's death—referred to in the next chapter—hushed all the clamour, and on May 11th both sides of both Houses joined in paying tribute to the esteemed Monarch so suddenly removed. During that month of muffled animosity, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour had discussed the inadvisability of taking measures involving a constitutional crisis at the beginning of a new reign, and a Veto Conference was the outcome, the members, four from each Party, being Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, Lord Crewe, Lord Lansdowne, Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Cawdor, Mr. Birrell and Mr. Austen Chamberlain. Twelve meetings of this Committee had been held when, on July 29th, Mr. Asquith announced that it was considered necessary and desirable to continue the discussions, but after they had sat twenty-one times no agreement was arrived at and another election was immediately discussed as essential. On November 19th Mr. Asquith opened the campaign at the National Liberal Club, devoting himself entirely to the case against the House of Lords. On the 28th of that month Parliament was dissolved, having continued only ten months, the shortest period in twenty-five years of Parliamentary history. Home Rule entered largely into the speeches, as Mr. Redmond had declared that Home Rule would soon be an accomplished fact if the Lords' veto were removed. The general election commenced on December 3rd, the last of the pre-war period, and the Parliament which assembled at its close little thought what a long and

memorable stay it was to have or that the whole world outlook would change ere its members again faced the electorate. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was already out of the fray, although he was returned for West Birmingham and signed the roll of members. He was indeed, a pitiful semblance of his former virility, and the general public never knew how really stricken he was when he was wheeled forward in a bath chair to make his mark for the last time as a member of Parliament. On December 21st the last elections were over, showing a net gain of two seats to the Government, which returned with a majority of 126. And this, be it mentioned in parenthesis, was the last general election under those disqualifications which classed women, infants, peers, idiots, lunatics and aliens as alike ineligible to vote. The Parliament Bill again proceeded on its way, assisted by the "Kangaroo" closure, which allowed the chairman to make a selection from the thousand amendments, and in May Mr. Asquith said the Government regarded it as an obligation to propose a scheme of reconstitution of the Upper House within the lifetime of the present Parliament, if time permitted. On July 20th of 1911 the Parliament Bill passed its third reading in the Lords in a severely amended form. In recommitting the Bill to a hostile house of Peers, Mr. Asquith sent a letter to Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, intimating the Government's refusal to accept the Lords' amendments, and stating that if it was found necessary, the King had assented to the creation of sufficient peers to secure the passage of the Bill! This letter, read at a meeting of Peers at Lansdowne House, fell like a bombshell, and created a profound sensation throughout the country.

Now dilution applied to workshops is an excellent thing, the peers say. In workshops it gives all a chance, it assures ample workers, it expedites that beloved thing production,

and it stops ca'canny. But applied to the Peerage ! Never ! A "No Surrender" group sprang into being at once, and great wrath was displayed in both Houses. In the House of Commons on July 24th a continuous uproar prevented Mr. Asquith from making a statement regarding the question. Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Balfour pointed out the futility of such protests, but the venerable Lord Halsbury took the leadership of the "Last Ditchers" or the "Die Hards" as they were variously termed. Then, on August 10th, the House of Lords abdicated and meekly passed the Parliament Bill with a very ill grace, but with a good and sufficient majority of 131 to 114. Mr. Balfour later moved a vote of censure on the Government for having advised the Crown to take such a course and in reply, by the King's permission, Mr. Asquith disclosed the correspondence. This closed for a period a controversy of great importance, one which had been frequently discussed but never boldly grappled during the last two centuries. It was over the House of Lords and the creation of Peers that those lifelong colleagues and brilliant associates Steele and Addison severed their distinguished literary partnership and became rival pamphleteers, after their joint conquest in *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian*. Dr. Johnson always deplored this incident, but it was only the first and by no means the last, personal severance over the same issue.

I have dealt at considerable length on this episode because of its great importance.

The division on August 10th in the House of Lords was the most momentous made over a long period, and there has been nothing like it since. The Parliament Act, as it then became, cut down the absolute veto of the Lords to a suspensory veto, and it did not attempt the reconstitution of that House on democratic principles, a task which awaits democracy.

Meantime, Labour Exchanges, and State Insurance, on lines which need no explanation, had been introduced and were on their way to adoption. The Declaration of London, dealing with International Law for Naval Warfare, had been agreed upon and varyingly discussed, and Mr. Andrew Carnegie had submitted a plan for compulsory arbitration before going to war. Proportional Representation as an electoral system was coming into vogue abroad and was being more actively discussed here. There was dissatisfaction over the deplorable failure of the Small Holdings Act, which did not accomplish the purpose it was intended to meet, but began the upward climb of the price of land, a tendency that reached astounding heights by 1920. The Boy Scouts had increased to a membership of 300,000 and scout-craft and the skill of "Silver Wolf," "Wolf-cub" and the rest of them gratified the imagination of boyhood. The cry of "make the foreigner pay" was still heard in the land, and the demand for "two keels to one" was becoming clamant.

It is fashionable in certain ultra-democratic quarters to-day to belittle political action, and to extol the decisive qualities of direct industrial action. Wild speakers appeal to the gallery by deriding Parliament and telling the unskilled that the remedy is in their hands, regardless of the "gas house." Some are inconsistent enough to have secured a place in Parliament and then to give precedence to direct action. Political action is to direct action as splendour is to squalor, as light to darkness. Direct action, indeed, is the expedient of gross mental darkness. It may some day be needed, but as a substitute for political action it is grotesque. Numbers of people in all parts of England have sacrificed deeply for long years to build up a great democratic policy, which can be attained by political work. Are all these efforts to be thrown on the scrap heap, because

for want of foresight and patience, certain unskilled leaders of unskilled men desire to enjoy a little cheap popularity? Will this incompetent and ill-balanced group wreck our great outlook and laugh at the wreckage? No, they will not, for England is too sensible. I am led to a reflection like this after surveying the really fundamental crisis of 1910 and feeling an impulse towards a greater in the coming day.

It may not have had direct relationship to the price of bread or the hours of work, and may therefore have seemed academic to many toilers, but in actual fact it was Point One of a forward programme, the beginning of real political action of a character which cannot be resumed until democracy is itself again. I am too old-fashioned also to subscribe to the new superior cult which loftily preaches that the days of Parliament are numbered and that but a few more years shall roll ere we all, like Macaulay's New Zealander, gaze at the ruins of what was once the Mother of Parliaments. A great liner on a voyage needs a captain and a crew and perfect order and control or there is disaster on the high seas. So with the ship of State; we must have a course charted and defined by the passengers, and a crew to accomplish the journey. The State must remain a real thing, not confused with bureaucracy, for we must always retain a central and expressive force, essentially National in its character, but international in sentiment. The trouble with democracy to-day is that we have too many cults, with little demi-gods shouting in cul-de-sacs to distract the progressive forces. In 1909 we had begun to sound the trumpets around the walls of Jericho, but too many dropped them in the rush after the war-drums. They have not been found again yet and when they are sounded, many who were once trumpeters will be discovered, I fear, inside the walls, lured by war profits and honours.

CHAPTER XIII

Death of King Edward—The Rubber Boom—Polar Expeditions —Captain Scott's Fate—The Osborne Judgment—Payment of Members—Norman Angell Vindicated—An Arrest by Wireless.

ONE of the greatest newspaper feats ever accomplished in the history of the British Press was that executed on the night of May 6, 1910. Only that morning, the announcement had appeared that King Edward VII was confined to Buckingham Palace suffering from an attack of bronchitis, but the public was totally unprepared for the rapid and tragic developments of that day. That the King had caught a chill at Sandringham early in May was known and the bulletins were couched in terms of serious import, but probably only four medical men knew the real need to convey a serious impression. Certainly King Edward did not take the matter seriously, for he took lunch with his friends as usual, had coffee and a cigar in the afternoon, and when Queen Alexandra, who had only arrived in London the previous night, visited the King at 4 p.m. he remarked " I feel very unwell " and collapsed. The King never spoke again and at 11.45 p.m. the same night he had passed away. Just upon midnight an official bulletin issued by Sir. F. H. Laking and three other physicians reported that His Majesty had breathed his last in the presence of Queen Alexandra, the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal Family Just after 12.30

midnight Lord Knollys said to the group outside Buckingham Palace, "Gentlemen, the King is dead." The Prince of Wales dispatched a telegram to the Lord Mayor of London stating "I am deeply grieved to inform you that my beloved father, the King, passed away peacefully at 11.45 to-night." The tragic announcement was thus made in simple form at an hour when the nation was asleep, but every newspaper office was a hive of intense industry. This was a classic occasion to rise to, accompanied by every possible difficulty as to time and pressure. All the nation knew at breakfast next morning, even in the remotest parts of England, that the angel of death had passed over the land in the night and most people would vaguely realize that an almost incredible feat had been accomplished by the newspapers. Every ounce of effort had to be put forward that night, and whole pages of the news of the day, dear as the heart's blood to contributors, were ruthlessly scrapped to cater for the only essential fact of the night—the King was dead. It seemed utterly incredible, but it was true, and not a moment could be lost in speculation. The Press rose with a wonderful alacrity and great ability to the occasion, and in an astonishingly short time enormous supplies of well-written and well-illustrated records of the life, reign and death of King Edward were dispatched all over Great Britain.

King Edward's intense popularity was beyond question, and the cause of it was his frank humanity. He never posed but lived his own life in an easy, natural and generous manner. Poverty or suffering touched at once his deepest chords, and his personal philosophy of life seemed to be the recognition that as we all only pass this way once, it is advisable to make the journey of life as pleasant as possible, both for yourself and everybody else. Thus he travelled freely as a Monarch, enjoyed races and had a cordial place

for all types and classes of men. He had received the title of "Edward the Peacemaker" because his visits to foreign capitals generally stopped the pens of those unscrupulous enough to create friction between nations. Looking backwards now to his reign and the earlier period, one sees a distinct change in the public outlook. There was less of the exclusive arrogance of "Britannia rules the waves" and more intimate contact with the men of other lands. Anglo-German Leagues sprang up and the workers of England and Germany organized exchange visits; and the sooner we get back to that happy system the better will be the national outlook. The body of the late King lay in state in the Throne Room at Buckingham Palace for three days, after which it was conveyed to Westminster Hall, where half a million people filed past the bier during three days. The funeral procession on May 20th was preceded by a service conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was marked by every sign of national sorrow. King George, who had attended his first Privy Council and had been duly proclaimed with stately ceremony on May 7th, walked with the German Emperor and several other crowned heads. On June 23rd, the sixteenth birthday of the Duke of York was marked by his receipt of the title of Prince of Wales, the occasion being honoured by great festivities at Carnarvon. Sir Ernest Cassell found a very happy means of marking the new reign by presenting a sum of £200,000 to found an Anglo-German Institute, to assist English workers in Germany and German workers in England.

This royal year will always be remembered, too, as the year of the extraordinary boom in rubber shares. Malayan planters had found the cultivation of the tree to be remarkably profitable and friends of theirs at home were the first to get the hint of this lucrative investment. That started

the impetuous wave and the inordinate demands of the motor trade for rubber made the thing obvious. Good Para rubber was selling at 5s. 1d. a pound in January of 1909, but it had advanced to 12s. 1d. a pound by April of 1910, and with its advance in price rose the margin between the cost of production and selling price and rose also the value of shares. Enormous sums went into new rubber plantations in any part of the globe where rubber would grow, and the remarkable feature of the run was that many of those who did the best were totally inexperienced investors.

There came the thrilling announcement that Commander Peary had reached the North Pole on April 6th of 1909, and on his return he was able to disprove the claim made by Dr. Cook, his countryman, that he had done the same. Peary, who was an experienced Polar explorer, had left New York in the *Roosevelt* on July 6th of 1908, and wintered at Cape Sheridan. After his success and safe return he resumed naval duties, being subsequently promoted to the rank of Admiral, and he died in March, 1920. Captain Scott started out on his ill-fated but glorious expedition to the South Pole, near to which the most unique sepulchre ever erected to the memory of man was placed as a memorial to his gallantry. It is isolated amid the darkness and storm of the great ice barrier, recording on a stout cross the simple but ennobling facts of the episode, that Captain R. F. Scott, R.N., Dr. E. A. Wilson, Captain L. E. C. Oates, Lieut. H. R. Bowers and Petty Officer E. Evans died there on their return from the South Pole on March 25th of 1912. I would fain quote extensively from that marvellous diary of ten pencilled volumes found safely with the brave dead in that lonely tent. One cannot read it without being moved to intense admiration and to higher resolve. Lying storm-bound, far from human aid, Captain Scott, facing the inevitable end, calmly records

the circumstances that led to disaster. Every detail of the organisation of food supplies, clothing and depots for the seven hundred miles' stretch to the Pole and back worked out perfectly, but the unexpected happened. Seaman Evans sustained concussion of the brain and died, and a fearfully intense head wind with a temperature varying from minus thirty to minus forty-seven degrees, hampered progress. Then Captain Oates fell sick, and walked from the tent into the dark blizzard to die alone "as a very gallant gentleman." The brave band had actually reached a point eleven miles from the old "one ton" camp, with fuel for one hot meal and food for two days, but "for four days we have been unable to leave the tent" says the poignant record. "We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardship, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past."

"These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale."

This was written, and all the silent tragedy concluded just a few days before England rejoiced—on April 1st—at the message from Captain Scott which said "I am going forward with a party of five men, and am sending three back under Lieut. Evans." They reached the South Pole in February of 1912, and there found Amundsen's tent and the Norwegian flag which he planted there. The *Terra Nova* returned to New Zealand with the tragic news, and with the most wonderful collection of records and photographs ever secured by an expedition. I heard Commander Evans, who had taken charge, tell with deep emotion the story of the search party and their discovery of the tragedy on November 10th of 1912. I saw all those wonderful films and photographs and afterwards saw a memorial unveiled to the memory of Captain Oates.

Returning to home conditions from that departure, we find organized labour very seriously concerned over the Osborne Judgment, which made it impossible for them to make a compulsory levy for purposes of Parliamentary representation. The House of Lords had given this judgment against the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants on December 21st of 1909, on an appeal by Walter V. Osborne, and it was vital to the interests of trade unionism. Injunctions based upon it were issued against several unions, and it promised the wreckage of political action. The case was argued with great earnestness in the House of Commons on April 13th of 1910, and it was seriously noticed, for the Attorney-General, Sir W. Robson, suggested that in some degree the trade union grievance might be mitigated by the payment of members and of election expenses. Several Liberal speakers were opposed to the Labour claim, and the subject was talked out, but the new position had opened up immediately the necessity for the payment of members of Parliament. This really was not the establishment of a new precedent but the revival of a very old custom. An Act of 1544 speaks of the customary rate of a Knight of the shire as four shillings for every day of the Parliamentary session and two shillings or more for a burgess with allowances for "so many dayes as everie suche Knight and Burgesse may reasonablie jorney and resorte from their habitacions or dwellinge places to the saide Highe Courtes of Parliament."

Andrew Marvell, who died in 1679, was a paid M.P. and he and his colleague received 6s. 8d. daily as payment from Hull. In return for this they furnished reports to the citizens of the proceedings of Parliament. As the payment was made from local funds there was much local grumbling, and aspirants generally promised, as an election inducement, to serve freely. They did, but they took

their price in worse ways, the favourite of which was land enclosure. These anti-social practices led to stronger grumbling and in 1780 a Parliamentary Committee reported that members ought to be paid. Fox was in favour of the payment of members, and the Chartists declared for it, but Osborne, a railway porter, succeeded in bringing to pass a reform they all had failed to introduce. The Osborne judgment made a State payment immediately essential, and it stepped into the front rank of political issues. The next Budget made the requisite provision, and on August 10th of 1911, the Chancellor moved that "in the opinion of this House provision shall be made for the payment of a salary at the rate of £400 a year to every member of the House," excluding those members in receipt of a salary as Officer or Minister. This was carried by 256 votes against 158 and on August 15th the sum of £252,000 was voted for the purpose. On September 1st the members received the first quarter's instalment.

Well, it has always seemed to me that the nation has been exceedingly parsimonious, and therefore foolishly blind to its own interest, in this matter. The payment of members still remains at £400 a year, a figure which obviously does not meet the cost of living in London. We are therefore reduced to the position that a member with a private income can afford the luxury of being an M.P., and the member without a private income finds his first duty is to secure such work as shall assure an income. Practically all the great trade unions maintain a voluntary Parliamentary fund to contest elections and to assist members, but it should not be imagined that democracy is adequately represented by members who are (*a*) enjoying private incomes or (*b*) nominated from trade unions. There is a great political movement which is obliged to rely upon candidates of one of those types, or to invoke a candidate

who may have admirable abilities for the work, but who always earned his living, and shrinks from the economic prospect of £400 a year. I assume that legislators are valuable : that they are doing exceedingly important work, although sometimes they do it very badly, and that we ought to have the opportunity of selecting the very fittest men for the work. At present we cannot do that, for £400 a year can be secured in peace and quietness by a managing clerk, draughtsman, tradesman, traveller or canvasser. We need, therefore, I think, to set a new standard of value upon legislation, and to realize vigorously that it would be a business proposition to this nation to pay £1,000 a year to its legislators, and to expect the money's worth in things accomplished.

While the nations were whispering "Is it war?" with bated breath, while our armaments' bill was rising to one hundred millions per annum, what time spies were being talked of and convicted, and Mr. Haldane made the House shudder by a dissertation on high explosives, and told the members he had a cordite walking stick in the lobby ; a meteor flashed across the European sky. It was a book written by one who signed himself "Norman Angell," and it was on *Europe's Optical Illusion.* Seldom has a book created so lively a controversy in the exclusive circles of high politics. The writer sought to show what the bitter facts of experience have since shown, that the piling up of huge armaments was absurd and unreasonable. He demonstrated fairly convincingly that no country can do harm to another one by war without doing itself almost as much harm and that, in fact, no country can permanently enrich itself by victory over another nation. Indeed, he asserted that victory would prove almost as disastrous as defeat. This was an argument bold, new and refreshing. It created a deep sensation, and study circles were formed

all over this country and others to analyse the reasoning of this pundit. The militants of France, England and Germany scoffed at it. Were there not examples to prove the opposite? Did not Germany in Alsace, did not we in Egypt, did not every nation with a kick in it prove the glory and profit of conquest? The book did not cause a halt in the active and increasing preparations for war with somebody somewhere. The needs of Germany for a colony for her teeming population had been already turned down by the authority of the Press, and big ships, big guns, big armies, were the antidote to such stuff. Great towers of powder and shot were erected, and you know how with a roar they fell, and in the ruins? Turkey, Bulgaria, Austria and at last Germany herself cried mercy. Ha! ha! there was a great and rich nation, thrifty, industrious, prosperous, her very soil teeming in natural wealth, beaten to her knees. Oh, she deserved to be, and she was. Here were the conquering Allies, representing offended virtue in the great tragedy of Europe, and they could enter in to enjoy the spoils. The whole land screamed with the newspaper cry of rich indemnities and the *John Bull* placards were a disgrace to the spirit of the nation. The barriers were smashed at last, the guns were silent now, and with muffled tread our devoted, heroic, magnificent soldiers entered the promised land of milk and honey. They entered at Vienna and wept. The officers wired to their General "For God's sake tell them," but not yet, for old John Bull was not ready for the shock of this disclosure of Europe's Great Illusion. They entered at Cologne, and General Plumer sent that immortal telegram to the Supreme Council of Dunderheads at Paris apportioning the spoils on paper, to say that unless the starving civilians were fed, he could not answer for the discipline of the troops. They had entered Cologne and wept. But not yet, not

yet, England was not ready to realize the Great Illusion. Five thousand millions were talked of and all Europe was bleeding and starving. Now we, with an empty exchequer, using American money to compete with America, have got to loan money to Germany to start her competing with us again. We want her goods and she wants ours; no nation can live unto itself alone. The cup of militarism has been drained to its bitter dregs. All the artificial elation is over, and we awake in the chill of the morning with a sad head, to realize there is no new world, but a good one wrecked. Great Britain herself is reduced to poverty and almost bankruptcy, the Great Illusion has dawned, and Norman Angell comes forward as the conspicuous success of the war. He comes forward as the ambassador of peace and his plea is not based upon sentiment but cold business fact. He has translated the great gospel of peace on earth into terms of cash and economics. He has emerged from the supreme test as the only reliable prophet of what would be the result of the war.

Other writers who at the same time were provoking old prejudice and tilting a lance in the cause of freedom were John Galsworthy, Geo. Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Arnold Bennett. I dare not intrude upon the reader a discussion of these able writers and their messages, but each was shaping public thought to a wider outlook.

The populace was far more interested in Crippen than in all these, Angell included. Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen, an American, was suspected of the murder of his wife, Belle Elmore, a music hall artiste, whose mutilated remains were discovered in a North London cellar. A world-wide search began and the criminal was arrested in mid-ocean by means of wireless telegraphy. He was on an outward-bound Canadian steamer, accompanied by his typist, Ethel

le Neve. He was arrested and tried, found guilty and sentenced to death at the Central Criminal Court on October 22, 1910. World-wide interest was evinced in the case on account of the effectiveness of wireless telegraphy. Romance had anticipated submarines and aeroplanes, but it had not anticipated such a dramatic episode as this magic touch of the hand of the law upon a fugitive far away on the waters.

CHAPTER XIV

Our Great Cities—Contrasts in London—Modern Industrial Centres—Tragedy and Hope—The Northern Universities —Adult Education—Trade Unionism.

ABOUT seventy-eight per cent. of the people of this country inhabit the towns, and there is every excuse for their so doing. What proportion of these town dwellers reside in the dozen or so great cities can soon be annotated by the curious, but their very greatness indicates that cities have decided amenities. It certainly is a notable fact that the standard of health is admirable in our great centres, and that on a town "moor," where not a blade of grass relieves the sombre view, the children at play present a very fair sample of young England. In the delightful sylvan surroundings of north, south, east and west, and in the mountain regions of Wales, I have found housewives and children alike often looking far from well, and indeed in many cases consumptive, and have discovered a better standard in the crowded trams of congested cities. There are reasons for this, the first being one of the elementary science of sanitation. It is delightful to extol the virtues and graces of rural places after a sojourn in the country, but for regular, for keeps, so to speak, for winter as well as summer, give me the town. That may be a case in which heredity chooses the environment, for my mother was born in London and I was born in Manchester, and I have some sympathy with the old lady who left the

country because it was too noisy, and secondly because you couldn't tell what time of the year it was. She missed the hawkers of watercresses and spring onions, and the baskets of primroses and violets on the streets, and she chose the town. Undoubtedly the English city of to-day lays the world at the feet of people of leisure. The great men of politics, literature, art, science and every world in which we delight are only names to the villager, but in the cities they are seen and known in the flesh. I could subscribe a most formidable list of eminent people of our times whom I have seen and heard and perchance spoken with in the last ten years. In time they all come under your journalistic ken, and you learn their little foibles and personalities, and when one of them makes a sensation some day you exclaim "That's just like him." If you must live in a city, and read Dean Hole as your means of enjoying a garden, this is one of your compensations, but there are others. When you have the choice, choose a good city, with attractive surroundings, and if you choose the one in which I am now writing, you will have chosen the best of them all. London is very attractive, and I love to walk the West End. A house in Kensington Palace Gardens or Park Lane costs a "sight o' money," and the average man living in London really lives in two places. He spends hours each day in a provoking, soul-destroying scramble from the dull suburb where he sleeps to the roaring centre where he works. That must have its compensations, however, or there wouldn't be those crushes. If it is sheer necessity without a hope of something better, I am sorry for millions of people, but when I join in strap-hanging in London I don't hear this chorus of protest. London people love a show, and they get all the big shows, the national processions, the pageants, the exhibitions, and shop windows like miles of fairyland. If you look about

London on a Saturday night, with scores of little suburban markets drawing their own crowds of shoppers, who get their food and return to their little flat or maisonette, do you ever think of the ways of the ant and the series of ant-hills? Forgive me saying it, but I do. In London I have dined expensively and exquisitely—at other people's expense mainly—and have stayed in that luxurious West End; and in London, also, near the Embankment, I have enjoyed tea served for two for threepence inclusive. And a white table-cloth was spread for our three halfpence each! In London I knew a man who had twenty ways of cooking oatmeal, and he declared there was nothing like a handful of oatmeal, boiled and stirred for twenty minutes, to make you feel you had enjoyed a famous blow-out. Dear fellow, his mind was always 200 miles due north, and when one day a beneficent Yorkshireman offered him a railway ticket back to the land of his fathers, he wept, then ran for King's Cross station. For five hours he sat on the platform ere that precious train came in, and then he left London for ever. When I was coming up to London, his mind turned to penny herrings and bowls of oatmeal, and he always looked very sorry.

Your provincial city offers the same wonderful contrasts in life, not quite so extensively as London, but still very acute. You bump up against new studies every day, and meet men of every clime and race. They keep your mind expanding to embrace east and west, and the mental exercise is good. Here wealth vaunts itself, but is no richer than its surroundings. Rich and poor walk the same streets, and rub shoulder to shoulder, whereas in the village the peasant would step off the path for the squire to pass by. In the provincial city it is not a long way home and you don't burrow like a mole to get there. Down in the industrial parts you shall feel pangs of sorrow that so many

thousands live in such gloomy streets, with such meagre amenities of life. The picture-house and the pot-house are the evening diversions, and the missioner is the most distinguished visitor. In these back courts and alleys are tenements below the street level, in which the sun has never shone, and the only light is reflected from a white-washed wall four feet from the window. Heavy trains rumble over the archways near by, and even the archways are tenanted, for people must live somewhere. In London I have seen men sleeping in boxes under shop-windows, and on counters after the sales are over, and in provincial cities I have seen them in conditions almost as bad. In such surroundings, squalid in the extreme, do you wonder that people cease to care and display a terrible indifference to life? The old man dying in the garret is alone and uncared for and only mutters resentment and suspicion at any intrusion. The room is in a deplorable state, but who cares, for it will be vacant soon and then it can be cleared. A child screwed up in a broken chair downstairs is clearly fading away. Her face is pallid and thin, and the poor mother has buried three and will bury this one soon, and lacks a single idea of emancipation. Here in one room are a dead baby, two juvenile invalids, and a drunken father snoring in the chair. Down here I met a dear old man who always carried a list of things he could do without. It was a long and sad list, and he learned by experience to add to it. When I met him he had recently taken off his threepence a week for bacon. I missed him one day and found he had made his last shopping round. He had gone to where he will not have to carry a list of things he ought not to have done without. Wealth and comfort are delightful things, but they look so hollow when one comes up against misery and want which a little generosity could remove. In our city I know a woman

who sells laces, and slips off occasionally to see her child, which looks up wonderingly as to where its mother, its all in all, goes to. She goes to sell laces to thoughtless passers-by. We have a vast and poignant mass of poverty in our city, even in 1920, and polite society does not like to hear about it. We have Jewish, Irish, Italian and even Japanese quarters in our city, all full of peculiar interest, and we have the great British industrial quarters, where the steam hammers bang and furnaces glare and metal runs white and hot. No city has such varied industries, for here you can see not only all the staple trades but the glass-blower, the clay-pipe maker, the silk-hat maker, the gun-stock maker, and a whole lot of curious callings. A vast city is an epitome of the world.

A city by night is very interesting. It begins with the crowds assembled in halls and places of amusement. A hundred large audiences at once enjoying the entertainment they have chosen, while night-schools and lectures are almost legion in number. Then comes the homeward rush of cars, and a gradually quietening peace. The great arc lights shine down upon the policemen, street-sweepers, and a few belated passengers. The midnight cars roll away, the hot-chestnut man turns homeward, the motor-sweepers creep out like creatures of the night and hurry about their work. The very statues seem to hold conversation in the stillness, and the great black buildings look down on the deserted scene. And a red glow in the sky tells of furnaces unceasingly at work, and of men toiling in hot foundries and steel works while the world sleeps.

The great institutions of a modern city will unfold a wonderful story. The infirmaries, hospitals, maternity homes, and various nursing homes are all full and all need enlarging. They are all doing a gracious and glorious

work, and eminent surgeons, devoted doctors and willing nurses move about on their many errands of mercy. The police can tell you a fascinating story of their side of city life, and the fire brigade maintains silent watch and ward for the alarm which will bring the great motor engines clanging along the streets. A very great work proceeds in our modern cities, and the responsible administrators need to be men who specialize in civic affairs even more keenly than upon their own business. It is impossible for any councillor to grasp all the municipal work, and most will devote themselves to three subjects, trusting their colleagues to grasp some others.

There are physical tragedies in cities, to be looked upon with awe. A procession of sightless children is simply a saddening volume of accident, neglect, and racial sin, and a loud appeal to humanity is made by the school of deaf and dumb, whose tutors accomplish the superhuman in imparting knowledge to these strange classes.

All our English cities of 1920 represent a great humanitarian work proceeding very quietly. There are Babies' Welcome Associations to furnish milk and clothing to mother and infant; there are homes for little children, where the matron represents the resurrection and the life to wasted little frames. I have known a still-born baby to receive the breath of life from a matron, and to become a healthy vigorous infant in an hour, with full prospects of healthy life. I have seen the unwanted child, deserted on a door-step on a winter's night, taken up tenderly by a vigilant policeman, and received in all kindness by nurses who try to replace the inhuman mother. There are powers of darkness in a city, and crews of depredators who haunt dark ways to way-lay, to rob and to seduce. But beyond, and greater than, all these malevolent influences, the light of day is dawning, and the fight between good and evil

is being steadily and continually won by the good. Not in all England to-day shall you find such a community as the beggars and thieves of Axe Lane, who made Goldsmith shrink with horror ; nor can you find those evil dens and conditions that were so prevalent when Dickens wrote. The passing years tell a story of the upward rise to a wholesome outlook and give inspiration to the time when all men and women shall be worthy and delightful members of society, and when the "unwanted" infant shall be no more.

I am glad to live under the friendly shade of University towers. As I write by night I can hear the cheers of students at festive gatherings, and when the eye and hand get weary I pause awhile to cheer mentally. There is fun on foot, and it's the call of the blood. I have seen our students ride elephants, capture tram-cars, and parade in the oddest Jazz costumes, but I never knew them to wilfully do hurt to any man. Later I saw these young men drilling for war. Early every morning, in sunshine and in frost, during the early months of the European War, these young men of England mustered in the pleasant field by my house, to drill for army life. Morning by morning they came along with a swing, all clad in white woollen sweaters, singing with gusto :—

Here we are, Here we are, Here we are again.

They were our herald of the morning. My garden wall presented a near way to the field and I fancy many a gallant young fellow leapt the wall who later leapt just as blithely "over the top" and met death in Flanders. As the sun shines now of a morning I think of them, and wish they were here to leap the garden wall. Our northern Universities are great institutions. They may not have the classical traditions of Oxford and Cambridge ;

and they may not draw Eton boys and Girton girls, but they have a splendour of their own. Who, until the twentieth century dawned, would have imagined carpenters, fitters, printers and clothiers hastening off after a hard day's work to the University to study biology, botany, economics, literature and other subjects? But they do so here. Who would have imagined the sons and daughters of workmen coming into residence at a University, and taking degrees in science, art and medicine? But they do so here. Who would have imagined learned professors, after a day of classes, hastening off in the evening over half a county in a perfect network, to take history or astronomy with a band of workmen? But they do so here. And I am filled with hope and enthusiasm for the future of England when I realize that these extensive Universities are not big enough, that their class rooms and professors are not numerous enough, to meet the ever increasing demand for their services. That is one of the inspirations of a great city, that the faces of the young people are towards the light, and in but a little time, comparatively, we shall be emerging from the gloom, with education as the golden key to an era when every person shall aspire to nobility, sincerity, tolerance and ability.

There are many other means of education, very widespread, and touching all the land, but in the cities they are vividly centralized. The Workers' Educational Association is doing a wonderful work, and, just as it should, it imparts a helpful and social atmosphere to its activities. And how very many Sunday mornings I have tramped through the snow to find a warm fire and a cheery welcome from an Adult School circle, gathered together to sing, to worship and to discuss the things worth while. Local Education Committees furnish admirable facilities, notably in the large centres, for evening education. Here you shall see

boys as entranced young alchemists as they watch test-tubes over the Bunsen jet. Co-operative Societies vie with each other to furnish educational lectures and classes for their members, and as I look round our city of an evening I utter the belief and hope that more men are gathered together in discussions of this kind than in all the bar-parlours of bung. What a notable change this is from the statement of Mr. A. J. Mundella in the 'eighties that in certain regions of East London four shillings and threepence was spent on drink for every penny on education. In our darkest slum regions there is the light of welcome to a settlement, and we can take heart of grace from a survey of the city.

Nor should Trade Unions be forgotten in the scheme of things educational. Indeed, the change is probably more notable here. Twenty years ago, ten years ago, even five years ago, it was essential to hold branch meetings on licensed premises to assure an attendance. To-day it is not so. Hundreds of branches meet by preference on unlicensed premises, and when the element so foolishly described as "brawn" meets on industrial business, the discussions are often most able and valuable. Even ten years ago the Trade Union Congress was not exactly a gathering of angels. They who attended will smile and know what I mean. There is a change to-day! It is most emphatic, and the few dear old "Die Hards" of rougher times look on in surprise. In this great field of organized labour there are ten thousand men to-day as capable as only ten were when this century dawned. It has been my duty for some years now to examine every month some hundreds of trade union branch reports. These are mainly written by the men who are drivers and firemen on the railway service, and they are admirably done. The continual rise in standard in these hundreds of reports tells

me plainly that workers are selecting as their leaders and executors men qualified by education and calm judgment. I receive many nicely couched typewritten letters from slaters, quarrymen, porters and turners. They cherish the work, and give of their best, because they have the fine incentive to service. Trade Unionism passes these offices round continually, and is indeed raising the status of the workers in more than a material sense.

But from the contemplation of city life we must take a departure. My particular desire is to tell the story of the years : twenty years of wonderful import to the history of England. Let us, therefore, resume the narrative.

SECTION THREE

THE ORDEALS OF WAR

CHAPTER XV

The Coronation of King George—A Day with the Fleet—The *Titanic* goes down—Mystery Airships by Night—The Ulster Volunteers—Darkening Clouds.

THE Coronation of a King is always an interesting event in the history of a nation, and England was jubilant on Thursday, June 22nd of 1911, for the Coronation of King George V. Since last a George occupied the throne of England enormous changes have taken place, and the contrast is just about as sharp between the calibre of the earlier Georges and the King who was crowned with the good will and esteem of everybody on the day mentioned. London had become the world's Mecca for the moment, and the day was an epitome of the reign then opening. It began in sunshine, touching the sombre grey of London with a golden hue ; it passed into cloud and rain and opened out again to a calm eventide. Very early there were millions astir, and crowded galleries, platforms and pavements watched the initial pageantry of Life Guards cantering about, with white plumes above their burnished helmets. A little procession of Crimean veterans evoked a kindly cheer, and then the Chelsea Pensioners, black hatted, grey bearded, scarlet coated, and much bemedalled, created interest. Most of them could

> Shoulder a crutch
> To show how fields were won.

and they looked proudly on the multitude assembled to witness the procession. Signals were passing between the roof of Buckingham Palace and the Abbey, and then, at 10.30, there were sharp staccato terms of command to soldiers holding the route, looking severe in scarlet and pipeclay, and a general rigid tension set upon everything. The golden coach was emerging from the Palace gates for the journey through the West End. The carriages passed slowly by, the windows splashed with rain, and —(here I must quote the description of a London newspaper)

"A cheer broke from the crowd, armed with newspapers. It was for the last coach. At the window appeared a flaxen head, a thin, narrow and boyish face, lighted by two smiling eyes full of good humour. It was the German Crown Prince."

Of another coach I quote this description :—

"On the front seat were three little princes in Highland dress ; on the back seat was a handsome little boy trying to look grown-up, and a sweet little girl in white, whose desire to bow prettily and do the right thing almost precipitated her off the seat and out of the carriage window every time she acknowledged the delighted cheers."

May the Prince of Wales and the Princess Mary forgive my temerity in thus quoting. Then followed the Royal Horse Guards, in red plumes, blue tunics, and shining breastplates, mounted on black chargers ; then even sailors on horseback, and motley groups of men from Britain overseas ; then the great gilded coach, so massive and resplendent ; and the King and Queen were being conveyed to their crowning. It was one of London's greatest days of festival, and it passed, with its tremendous concourse of people, without any unpleasant incident. There was all the historic observance about the ceremony in Westminster Abbey, and the second part of the Coronation, on the

following day, consisted of a procession by the King and Queen through the streets of London, accompanied by the Dominion Premiers and the Indian Princes, with troops from various parts of the Empire.

The Coronation week concluded with a Naval review on June 24th, nearly 200 warships being drawn up in most impressive array off Spithead. The British Navy is a tremendous proposition, as you realize for the first time when passing along the lines of the great grey ships of war. I have seen them lying asleep by night as one leaves the grey coast of England, when lights twinkle out over the waters, and dark monsters lie squat on the waves. In an extended order they seem to the imagination to belt half the English coast, and searchlights are ever ready to examine the unexpected. Shells, be it added, were as ready as lights, for in an inspection of one of the great ships of the line, in the summer of 1911, my attention was drawn to those endless chains by which shells are drawn up from the explosive store to the guns. There were shells in the chain, shells in the store, and shells behind the guns. When there were "incidents" afoot, the Navy bustled with ominous activity. Cutters and submarines moved about on the water, and standing high like grim gaunt giants, with enormous gun barrels protruding over the side, were the first-class ships. Those guns move around and up or down with incredible facility, and the great shells that can wreck a town or sink a ship are fired by the pulling of a trigger much like a revolver trigger. Go down below on a great Dreadnought, as I have done, and you shall descend seven and even nine floors deep, down below the water, down where the air-tight safety compartments are, down where the turbines are, down where the men hold sacrifice posts at times of danger. The captain's bridge is a study in the fine art of war and navigation. Here one reads the whole face of the waters

around without looking up, and here one may signal the master gunner or the chief engineer or the pilot instantly. A day with the Fleet is most memorable. Dear old British Fleet, so majestic, so courageous, we of the land return our deep thanks for your service. At great sacrifice you fed us during those awful years, and allowed no hostile foot to tread this land. The very ship over which I was taken with such kindness from officers and men is now below the waves; for she sank in defence of England. All honour to the Fleet, which saved us in the emergency caused by duplicity. May there never again be such a call for the heroism of the sea.

Early in the year 1912 the oldest monarchy on earth, with a history going back to the time of Abraham, that of China, fell, and the Emperor abdicated in a most decent sort of manner. When the Chinese Republic was established the dethroned Monarch very politely said that from the people's hearts the will of Heaven is discernible: how can we, therefore, he exclaimed, oppose the desire of millions for the glory of one family. Many crowns and thrones have fallen since that time, but none with such grace and courtesy as that.

These Chinese episodes were overwhelmed by interests at home, for we had scarcely emerged from the serious railway strike of 1911, during which mounted troops paraded the streets, and the business of the country was dislocated, when two others threatened, one by the miners and the other by—the doctors! The British Medical Association was in revolt against the scale of pay fixed for panel patients under the National Insurance Act. They threatened to make the whole scheme unworkable, and would not enrol panel patients. They foresaw the destruction of family practices, and big rounds for little returns in future, but after a conference with Mr. Lloyd

George and a number of crowded provincial meetings, the doctors accepted. Some of them accepted thousands of patients. They had queues of patients to enrol, and found a very good thing where they had suspected a very bad one. In July of 1912 came that awful colliery disaster at Cadeby, in South Yorkshire, when the sudden loss of eighty lives grieved the nation, and solemnly reminded all classes once again of the risks undertaken by miners in their conquest of nature's storehouse. The King visited the scene and descended the neighbouring mine of Elsecar. The great cotton lock-out was causing loss, hardship and acrimony in Lancashire, and

Hush ! There comes wild, almost unthinkable news of awful tragedy at sea, the incredible announcement that the *Titanic* has struck an iceberg and is lost. The first incomplete message struck like an iceberg itself through all England, and we all shuddered as if we were on deck. Surely, surely there was some mistake ? Within an hour came confirmation of the worst ; the unsinkable was sinking, and two Continents reeled under this staggering blow of the greatest calamity which has ever occurred at sea since the Spanish Armada was destroyed. The *Titanic*, the new and glorious White Star liner, was the largest ship in the world. She had received a magnificent send-off from Southampton on Wednesday, April 10th, on her first voyage to New York with a full complement of passengers. All told there were 2,340 souls aboard, and if ever passengers could look forward to a thoroughly enjoyable crossing, it was that concourse of people waving their adieus from bridge and deck as the great vessel headed up the Solent for the open sea. A romantic interest surrounded the vessel, and there was keen competition for places on board. Shortly before midnight on Sunday, April 14th, when this newest leviathan was cutting the deep at full

speed ahead, there was a wild impact, a heavy grinding, and man's mightiest creation was reduced to a crumbling toy by the forces of nature. The *Titanic*, pride of the shipbuilders, had made her first and last voyage, and bowed to her fate under the stars. We who saw the great vessel, with her glorious apartments, her fine equipment, and well-stocked store-rooms ; her graceful lines and four huge funnels which could accommodate two street trams in each, little dreamed that her history was to be so brief and terrible. At noon on April 10th, Captain Smith from the bridge gave the signal to "Let go" from the landing stage, but at noon five days later the proud ship, her proud captain, and 1,634 other souls were below the waves. The fatal crash and the grinding had not alarmed all on board. She was the *Titanic*, and they resumed their cards or their rest. But very soon the order to put all women on the lifeboats caused a full realization of catastrophe. All women and children were transferred to boats amid heart-rending parting scenes. The wireless operator was sending out over the waters to the last the S.O.S. signal. The *Virginian*, the *Baltic*, the *Olympic* and the *Carpathia* picked up the sad message, and a great life saving race over hundreds of miles began. No doubt many of the 705 who were saved, after terrible dangers and hardships, owed their lives to this despairing message and the response. The men stood calm on the decks as the vessel sank to the water-line. Great waves broke over her, and soon the bridge was engulfed. She sank rapidly. Captain Smith's last call "Be British" sounded just before he disappeared in the swirl, and a frightful scene had reached its climax. Many distinguished and useful men died that night, and many homes were bereft. There followed the agonizing wait for lists of the missing, and the memorial services for the dead. Seven days after the *Titanic* had sailed England was

in mourning. On May 2nd the Board of Trade Inquiry was opened into the disaster, and on July 30th its report was presented, that the calamity was due to excessive speed. Human nature had been indifferent to nature's colossal forces. Since that time we have sustained such terrible losses of life as to have our senses almost benumbed to the value of life. It was not so in 1912.

Next, Ireland came up anew, and 218,000 people signed a Covenant against Home Rule. In June of 1913 rifles and bayonets were seized in Dublin and Belfast, and on July 5th the Ulster Volunteer Force paraded. Sir Edward Carson received a message from Mr. Bonar Law that "Whatever steps the Ulster Unionists might take, constitutional or unconstitutional, they had the whole Unionist party behind them." This blank cheque greatly encouraged the Ulster protest, and the House of Lords rose to it by rejecting the Home Rule Bill, the Welsh Church Bill, and the Plural Voting Bill in one week! A Provisional Government was set up in Ulster, and Lieutenant-General Sir G. Richardson was appointed "General" of the Ulster forces. A separate coinage was talked of, and distinguished soldiers like Sir John French sought release from the responsibilities that might come upon them. Mr. Asquith had to take a firm line as to the supremacy of civil over military rule and things became decidedly ominous. The tragic events of 1920 still deepen the gloom of Ireland, the insoluble problem of creeds, policies and races.

There were portents on the railways, too, for the dismissals, and very harsh dismissals, of Driver Knox from the North Eastern and Guard Richardson from the Midland caused national trouble. I have a lively recollection of one snowy night in February, 1913, when the *Daily News* rang me up at 11.30: "The Midland Railway have sent a letter to Guard Richardson," they said, "and we will

read it to you. Can you get us his reply any time during the night?" They read the message and I set out by motor for Normanton. We started with two drivers, but three motor-cars were used before the journey through the snow was accomplished, and I got the *Daily News* over the telephone. It was a fine dignified reply, worth the journey, and the morning paper contained the letter and the mission of the night. That is how modern journalism scores. At any cost or sacrifice, give the information to the people. What lively night watches we had in those times! There was the escapade of Albert Knight, the ex-vicar, whose elopement from Leeds was so cloaked by duplicity that a memorial sermon was preached in great earnestness by a Bishop who only survived by a few weeks the disclosure which four other journalists and myself received without the least surprise from the Chief Constable. There was the unhappy Marconi shares imbroglio, involving the names of Cabinet Ministers and causing Mr. Lloyd George to offer his bank pass book as evidence on his behalf. There was the award, after seventy-four days' hearing, and made on January 13th of 1913, of £12,515,264 to the National Telephone Company for the transfer of its business to the nation. The claim entered was for twenty-one millions! Telephones have advanced materially since that time, and the automatic telephones installed in many centres are amazingly efficient and prompt. How well I recall the opening of the largest automatic exchange in Europe—at Leeds—and the instant tinkle of thousands of needles when the Postmaster-General pulled out the plug. These needles, more skilfully than any human agency, locate for you the wanted number, and put you through. There was the remarkable growth of the picture-house business, the typical diversion of the twentieth century. The first, a modest wee thing, was opened to exhibit "moving

pictures" in a small hall at Olympia, London, in 1896. In the year 1900 they were crude travelling novelties, but in the year 1920 they are gigantic businesses. There must be close upon 20,000 picture houses in England to-day, running, many of them, fine orchestras and most costly and elaborate but decidedly sloppy productions. The regular attendance is rising to such a figure that nearly a third of the population seem to be visiting the pictures once a week. They are a seductive post-war proposition for the newly rich, and new houses are constantly in contemplation.

How very delighted I should be, good reader of mine, if this story could continue on the same harmless lines through the subsequent years, but alas, at the geniality of high noon, with wonderful promises of a fine day, storm clouds gathered over Europe, and soon we were precipitated into that ghastly storm which has soaked and weakened us all. I have hinted through the years at flashes of lightning which indicated unsettlement, but these had become rapidly more alarming as 1911 gave place to 1914. In 1911 we had the *Panther* incident at Agadir, when the German vessel withdrew from the little harbour on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. We can recall the strange and ominous utterance of warning to Germany by Mr. Lloyd George at the Mansion House, the first note being thus struck by the man who was destined to carry much of the burden. The Prussian landed "gentry" had begun to talk absurdly of military conquest and glory, and "Der Tag" was creeping into current expressions. There was speculation in both 1912 and 1913 on the possibility of "a bloody and pitiless struggle," and the cost of living was steadily rising from some unexplained cause. There is little doubt that supplies of munitions were supplanting supplies of food as the first concern of Ministries, and scarcity had begun to creep in imperceptibly. The pound was substantially down in

purchasing power before a shot was fired. On November 3rd of 1911 a sentence of 21 months' imprisonment was passed upon a German for espionage at Plymouth, and in February of 1912 another one was sentenced at Winchester to three years for the same offence. In the same month began the scare on the North East coast about mysterious airships flying by night. Green lights were seen, and sounds were heard in the sky, and there was much comment and denial, but there is little doubt now. Militarism was taking the helm, and militarism is arrogant and impatient. Quite early in the war I saw a Zeppelin approach the East Coast on its errand of destruction. It was floating along like a huge cigar in the cloudless but dark sky of early morning, and we watchers were startled by the flash of a green light from the cliffs of Yorkshire. A green light flashed answer from the airship, and it turned southward towards Hull. Motors set out to search the cliffs, without result, but Hull was bombed that night, and we afar off saw the flashes of angry flame.

In 1912 Mr. Churchill gave consolation that we had a 60 per cent. superiority in Dreadnoughts, and it comforted the militarists. In February of the same year Sir Edward Grey at Manchester emphatically declared that there had never been the least foundation for the rumours that Great Britain intended an unprovoked attack upon Germany, and in March of 1913 Mr. Asquith assured the House of Commons that if war arose between European Powers there were no unpublished agreements restricting or hampering the freedom of the Government or Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in the war.

In June, 1913, one William Klare, a German dentist, was sentenced at Winchester Assizes to five years'

penal servitude for attempting to obtain confidential Naval documents at Portsmouth. These were but slight indications of a vast network of espionage covering all Europe and ordered by all Governments. Young British officers were tried and sentenced in Germany, and a large number of the spies of all nations went undiscovered. The peoples were being piloted into the whirlpool.

CHAPTER XVI

Tragedy and National History—Embassies at High Pressure—Summary of Ominous Telegrams—Deutschland Ueber Alles—War Declared—The Instant Effects—The Bank's Black Week.

TWENTY years ago the populace sang light-heartedly "War clouds gather all along the line," and forty years ago it sang with determination, "We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do," and so on.

Six years ago our soldiers sang with confidence :—

> It's a long way to Tipperary,
> It's a long way to go.

The history of human life is not all sunshine and prosperity. To all of us there come times of prosperity and adversity, times of jubilation and times of sorrow. On the grand run of the journey of life we find ourselves launched suddenly into dark tunnels, when the light of day is blotted out for a period, and the very song of the birds is stilled. So hitherto it has always been with the history of nations. Periods of armed peace have been succeeded by periods of war and we have now reached the tragic point in this Pageant of Modern England in which we are about to plunge into the abyss, not to emerge again for five long years, during which dark journey the cry of anguish rings through the land. The darkness and tribulation are only relieved by occasional gleams of daylight, reminding us of the blue

canopy of heaven. Grand opera is mainly tragic, with diverting interludes, and as the plot matures to the tragedy, a hush steals over the audience. So in the Assize Court, when primal instincts have led to tragedy, and a man is on trial for his life. A solemn hush falls as the jury delivers the verdict and a Judge assumes the black cap ere he pronounces that awful sentence. This, too, is a time for silence, when a nation comes to the brink of battle, and her sons are armed for the fray. This time you and I have now reached, when we are to live over again those poignant and wonderful times of 1914, when half the civilized world sprang to arms, and called in the aid of part of the uncivilized world to push on the business of war Europe marched in massed formation down into the valley of the shadow of death. We had that awful spectacle of the flower of humanity of all the nations ploughed and churned into death by all the most modern devices of science and civilization. Ghastly death dropped from the clouds upon the peaceful citizens of London, Paris, Frankfort, Vienna and many another city of Europe. Infants were slain without mercy in that awful carnage and strong men wailed like children in their agonies on the far-flung battle front. Never was there such a war as this war, and let us pray that never again shall there be such a war as this war, in which the first-born of countless homes gave his life, the widow gave her only son, the wife gave her husband and the child gave its father.

How did all this come about? Future ages will look back upon this ordeal of armies and stand aghast that civilization had no brake power to stop the mad impetus that rolled ever more certainly, gathering force and weight as it rolled to the terrific impact of 1914. Historians have told us at inordinate length and in great variety, and will continue to tell us, how it all happened. The nations

concerned published their Blue, Grey, White and Yellow Books to show how fully justified they were in all they did. All the activities and phases of war have been recorded in whole libraries of volumes, and as we look down together into the abyss, it is necessary first to define the route and to place the limits upon our observations. Adhering, therefore, to the title, we will take note as we pass of the manner in which the Great War affected England, illustrating only the most salient features, and beginning with a summary of the vital dispatches.

Late in June of 1914 a formidable part of the British Fleet was at the Kiel Regatta, and was visited there by the Kaiser, who boarded the flagship, *King George V.* On June 12th the Kaiser was visiting the Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria, and on June 28th the same Archduke was shot dead in the streets of Sarajevo. He was a very dull witted and uninteresting Archduke, but his death furnished a pretext to Austria for the presentation of an astounding ultimatum to Serbia. The Balkans, always a storm centre, formed a world of pent-up passions of vengeance and hate, and the fatal shot mentioned ignited all the piled up munition stores of Europe, which in their discharge destroyed the lives of millions, and still speeding on, the same bullets lodged themselves in human breasts at home from which the joy of life departed for ever with the pang of the missive. Truly, these were expanding bullets, for they arrived in the form of printed intimations, addressed from piles of many thousands of such at the War Office, printed ready for the purpose, intimating sympathetically that on a certain day No. —— was killed in action.

Never did Foreign Offices and Chancellories work at such high pressure as during those two terrible months July and August of 1914, but it was too late then.

The armed camps were prepared and the nations were grouped in formidable array. Statesmanship having failed, the young men and the guns became arbiters, and when might enters in, right departs. Desperate telegrams were flashing across Europe and deep called unto deep, but the impetus could not be stayed. Serbia was held answerable for the death of the Archduke, an incident which has never been explained, and which did not justify war. Austria held that the crime was planned in Belgrade, and in the startling and provocative ultimatum of July 24th the terms conveyed the impression of personal and national spleen existing on both sides. Strenuous efforts at conciliation were made, but a time limit of forty-eight hours fixed by Austria eclipsed all possibilities, even of telegraphy. On July 25th the Serbian Government replied to the ultimatum, accepting certain of the commands, but making reservations for inquiry as to others. Sir Edward Grey telegraphed the suggestion of inquiry and adjudication by Four Powers, but this was rejected, the Austrian method being mobilization and military preparations at the expiration of the period. The German Secretary of State remained cold to the appeal for conciliation, and preferred not to interfere, while there was yet time. A vast but silent and secret world of diplomacy was moving for position, and code telegrams, letters and conversations were hurtling about Europe. The old system of national jealousy, of plot and counter plot, had reached its climax. On July 18th President Poincaré, with his Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, visited St. Petersburg, and on July 29th, on his return, he immediately proceeded to a Cabinet Council. Only the previous day the German Ambassador had informed the French Foreign Office that Germany intended to support Austria in her attitude towards Serbia. Not until later, when armies were marching forth was all this mass of diplomacy disclosed,

and the public knew but darkly the frightful significance of it all. It was realized in Berlin on the night of Saturday, July 25th, when the Austrian time limit expired, that war on the grand scale was imminent, and the Unter den Linden echoed to the frenzied cry of "Deutschland, Deutschland Ueber Alles." But a week later and the same national passion swept London like a hurricane. On July 26th it was clear that Russia would not stand aside if Serbia was attacked, and on the following day the advice came from Russia that the Entente Powers should present a solid front to Germany. The British Fleet stood assembled on the same day at Portland and leave was stopped, while German vessels were gathering home in haste from far and near. The nations were thrilling to the prospect of Armageddon, and on July 28th Austria-Hungary formally declared war upon Serbia. On the same day the German Imperial Chancellor expressed to Sir E. Goschen his anxiety to work in concert with England and accepted the principle of mediation between Austria and Russia, but reserving the right to help Austria if she were attacked. Russia that day issued orders for partial mobilization to assist Serbia if she were attacked. Military measures were also being taken in France, and Germany complained of these. A further startling development on July 29th was the offer of the German Secretary of State that in return for British neutrality the German Government would give an assurance to make no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France, but not of French Colonies. Any operations in Belgium, it was said, would depend on the action of France, but at the end of war, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany. Poor Belgium has often been the cock-pit of Europe and when King Albert thrice refused in decisive terms to grant free passage to German forces intended for France it became

fairly obvious she was again to be molested. How terribly she was to be devastated no living person then realized. On July 29th Sir Edward Grey warned the German Ambassador in London of the possibility of England intervening in certain events if Germany and France went to war. Thus were the nations drawn into the whirlpool one by one. Germany gave warning on July 30th that unless Russia stopped mobilization, she would mobilize too, and final efforts were made on the same day from London and Berlin to secure mediation between Russia and Austria. The President of the French Republic made the request that if the British Government announced its intention to come to the aid of France there would be no war, for Germany would change her attitude. This view was strongly urged from Paris, which also reported that German troops were assembled round Thionville and Metz, ready for war. The same crowned heads who six years earlier had negotiated certain positions were wiring each other "for friendship's sake," while the armies were marching towards frontiers. On the last day of that historic month, indeed, conversations did develop between Russia and Austria, but the latter distrusted Serbia and the former distrusted Austria, and the whole sordid business turned upon imaginary national advantage and that precious allurement called prestige. They failed, and "Kriegsgefahr" (the imminence of war) was proclaimed with the loud tocsin in Germany. Austria began to move troops against Russia, and the land of the Tsars ordered general mobilization of army and navy. The same evening Germany issued a twelve hours' ultimatum to Russia to demobilize, and declared with emphasis that Russian action had spoiled all hopes of peace. Sir Edward Grey sent his telegraphic inquiries to Berlin and Paris as to the intention of observance of the neutrality of Belgium, and Germany equivocated.

Belgium had stopped a consignment of corn for Germany, it alleged, which constituted a hostile act. The German Ambassador in London asked Sir Edward Grey whether, if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian territory, Great Britain would engage to remain neutral. In his telegram of August 1st to the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Grey said :—

"I replied that I could not say our hands were still free, and we were considering what our attitude should be. All I could say was that our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion here and that the neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here. I did not think that we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone."

From Brussels came the official intimation that "in the event of the violation of the neutrality of their territory, they believed that they were in a position to defend themselves against intrusion."

While these and other vital messages were speeding over the wires, the general mobilization of the French Army was ordered. French forces, indeed, were already on the frontier, and reported a hostile force of eight army corps on a war footing, from whom attack was expected at any moment. Sir George Buchanan telegraphed from St. Petersburg :—

"I now see no possibility of a general war being avoided unless the agreement of France and Germany can be obtained to keep their armies mobilized on their own sides of the frontier, as Russia has expressed her readiness to do, pending a last attempt to reach a settlement of the present crisis."

It was a last moment and pathetic suggestion, but one might as well almost ask for the stars to stand still in their courses as to ask militarism to pause once it has assumed

sway. High fever was coursing through the entire body politic of Europe and only frantic cheers for war relieved the suppressed excitement. The general mobilization of the German army and navy was ordered on August 1st, to take effect the following day. As Russian troops were said to have crossed the frontier, a state of war existed between Russia and Germany from August 2nd. Mines were being laid about Hamburg and other preliminaries of war were proceeding by land and sea all over Europe. Luxembourg was crossed by German troops. That day the British Cabinet made its grave decision, and at its conclusion Sir Edward Grey gave M. Cambon the following memorandum :—

" I am authorised to give an assurance that if the German Fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping, the British Fleet will give all the protection in its power."

This assurance, it explained, was subject to approval by Parliament, but was given to assist France as to the disposition of its Fleet.

Sugar became very early a primary consideration, as before war had been formally declared, 100 tons of that commodity were unloaded from the British ship *Sappho* at Hamburg, and similar action was taken towards other vessels.

The King of the Belgians addressed the following appeal to the King of England on August 4th :—

" Remembering the numerous proofs of your Majesty's friendship and that of your predecessor, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and the proof of friendship you have just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty's Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium."

Germany proposed to Belgium an attitude of friendly neutrality, entailing free passage through that country, and, in case of refusal, to treat Belgium as an enemy. This Belgium categorically refused. It was also reported from Brussels that German troops had entered Belgian territory and that Liège had been summoned to surrender.

Following is Sir Edward Grey's message to Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin, on August 4th :—

"We hear that Germany has addressed note to Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs stating that German Government will be compelled to carry out, if necessary, by force of arms, the measures considered indispensable.

"We are also informed that Belgian territory has been violated at Gemmenich.

"*In these circumstances, and in view of the fact that Germany declined to give the same assurance respecting Belgium as France gave last week in reply to our request made simultaneously at Berlin and Paris, we must repeat that REQUEST, and ask that a satisfactory reply to it and to my telegram of this morning be received here by* 12 *o'clock to-night. If not, you are instructed to ask for your passports, and to say that His Majesty's Government feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a Treaty to which Germany is as much a party as ourselves.*"

THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR HAD BEEN DECLARED. Russia, France, Great Britain and Belgium were ranged against the Central Powers, and swords rattled all over Europe.

I have summarized and quoted these dramatic telegrams to convey a brief impression of the enormity of pathos behind them. Couched in official language and with every word weighed before use, they were full of most intense possibilities. No British Foreign Secretary ever

had to undergo such a terrible ordeal of responsibility and of physical endurance as did Sir Edward Grey then. The long weeks of anxious strain culminated in a night and day of continuous mental alertness, and only a strong man could have coped with the task. I knew him as a charming speaker not long before that time, and three years later I saw him, with diminished eyesight, reading by touch a book in Braille. There is little question that the nerve-racking experience of 1914 had deep effects. The origins of the war do not lie in these messages, but reach back down the years. Two diplomatic groups had existed in Europe and they were at cross purposes, and mutually suspicious. There was a Morocco crisis of 1906, a Balkan crisis of 1908, and there were continual conversations between military and naval experts. Plans of operation were discussed and there was systematic espionage. "Incidents" like that of Agadir in 1911, caused public excitement, and national opinion had been steadily hardening toward the inevitable great war of the twentieth century. In the House of Commons of August 3rd, Sir Edward Grey described November 22nd of 1912 as the starting point of the present crisis, and I have a vivid memory of wiring a thousand words of a speech by Lord Charles Beresford in that year. It was of such an explosive and serious character that I passed a note up to the noble lord asking for his verification of one statement about Germany. "Charlie" very readily passed down his authority. The roots of the war go back, in fact, to the year 1871, and to the vaunting of military conquest over one country by another. The roots of the war go down to draw nourishment from a wrong spirit and inspiration, and a foolish concept of greatness. The roots of the war lay in false doctrines, not confined to Bernhardi, Nietzsche and Treitschke, and not taught solely in Germany.

The declaration of war set mighty forces in motion, dislocated the life of the whole world, and liberated a flood-tide of hate and the worst human passions.

Germany positively quivered with militarist arrogance, and in England the worst German philosophies about the will to power and the superman and so on, were quoted as if Germany never had lived by anything else. Had the people been told that Nietzsche died insane in 1889, and that Treitschke was deaf from childhood, was a silent member of the Reichstag in consequence and died in 1896, having been nearly blind in his later years, then the public would not have got the idea as they did get, that these supposed leaders of modern thought were writing epistles of eulogy to the German cause in this war.

Nothing could justify or defend the German invasion of Belgium. It was a ruthless act of convenience, for which posterity will ever blame that country. Bethman Hollweg, in that last dramatic interview with Sir E. Goschen, described the British attitude as "terrible to a degree, just for a word—neutrality—a word which in war time has so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper."

The effects of the momentous decision were instant in this country and touched every phase of life. Troops were rapidly mobilized, and "priority calls" became general with telegraph and telephone. There was the marching of men and the gathering of the clans in city and glen and from all large centres special trains ran the newly mobilized troops to Aldershot. Arrived at this great military station, they found other special trains ready for the journey to the Channel ports with regular troops, some of whom were already landing in France. As battalions of men marched from camp to station they saw still other battalions arriving at the camp, and the whole vast organization of men, munitions, trains and ships moved like clockwork under

the precise direction of what is called red tape. Sir John French took command of the Expeditionary Force and Lord Kitchener, starting on his way to Egypt, was recalled by telegraph to undertake the duties of War Minister, held for some months then by Mr. Asquith, in consequence of the defection of some hundred officers at the Curragh. Thousands of motor lorries were claimed instantly, having been subsidized by the War Office with the right of claim for use in time of war. Thousands of horses were collected for the same purpose, and the effect was visible upon national life. By an Order in Council the entire railway system came under State control the same day. Stations were partially closed and guarded, and travelling facilities were restricted.

This Order brought into operation the Regulation of Forces Act of 1871, allowing the State to assume complete control of the railways in the United Kingdom ; it created a War Railway Council, and a Railway Executive. The Government undertook to guarantee to the Railway Companies net receipts based upon the aggregate net receipts for the corresponding period of 1913. All holiday trips and cheap excursions ceased and there was a precipitate desertion of the coast.

Unemployment became rife and rose to an alarming figure, while men retained in many cases assented to material reductions in wages. While abroad Thor with his giant's hammer was smashing cathedrals and blowing towns into rubbish heaps, England was secure, but changing rapidly. All minds were with the Expeditionary Force, and all attention was on the invincible advance of the vast German armies, preceded by Uhlan cavalry, until they reached Mons, and there the British 160,000 held the German million until French support arrived twelve days later. The Kaiser became instantly the most unpopular

person in England and the Crown "Pinch" was close second. National colours flourished everywhere and the "White Feather" brigade began early to use uncivil and biting tongues to secure enlistment by sneers.

The banks received the first full shock of the effects of war, but the "black week" at the Bank of England was really over before England was formally committed to war. There was an anxious run on the banks on Friday morning, July 31st, after Austria had declared war upon Serbia. Notes and postal orders were announced as currency, in lieu of gold, whose familiar jingle was confined to banks from that time. Gold was only payable from the Bank of England, and on Saturday, August 1st, there was a long queue of people anxious to secure their gold. There was still a long queue when the gates closed and the banks suspended business over the holidays. The effect on the bank rate for the discounting of bills was instant and alarming. On July 22nd it was 3 per cent.; on July 25th it was 4 per cent.; on July 30th 8 per cent; and on Saturday, August 1st, it was 10 per cent. A general moratorium was proclaimed on August 6th which relieved merchants and manufacturers from the responsibility of meeting their debts for a period. It expired on November 4th, after which a further month was allowed. Paper currency remained convertible into gold at the Bank of England and still remains so, if any one needs it. The blind workers of England, for example, continued to be paid in gold coin throughout the war in consideration of their defect. When the bank re-opened after the holiday the plunge had been taken, the first panic was over, the bank rate was 6 per cent, and on August 7th it was reduced to 5 per cent. There was a night and day lumber of guns, a loading of trains, a marching of men, bustle at every barracks and drill room, and an all pervading smell of grey paint.

Men marched away whistling and singing, and as the heavily loaded trains moved away their last assurance was that they would "Finish this little job and be home for Christmas puddin'." Meantime ominous reports were coming from Belgium. General Leman's defence of Liège was broken, and guns of mighty calibre had silenced the fortresses there and at Namur, and were moving towards Brussels and Antwerp. It was becoming obvious that the German war machine was a tremendous proposition. The world had not its equal in number, equipment and efficiency. Its only lack was the spirit of idealism, and for want of this spirit it was overcome.

Lord Morley, Lord President of the Council, and Mr. John Burns, President of the Board of Trade, resigned office in the Cabinet, and there was immediate discussion of a Coalition.

Sir John Jellicoe was given command of the Navy and received a message of confidence from the King. Food rose sharply in price, and there was a discreditable rush for stores by some who had available means. Only the sternest warnings and the promise of early action checked this harmful practice.

CHAPTER XVII

Smiles and Tears—Dame Rumour—The First Belgians—The First Wounded—Frightfulness—The *Lusitania* Sunk—The Coalition Formed—The Munitions Act—National Registration—The Derby Scheme—The Censorship—Two Budgets.

THERE are few Britishers who will read unmoved in future years the story of the first twelve months of the war. When the big guns began their booming in Europe they pronounced sentence of death upon countless thousands of young men who then were reading the war news, never dreaming that the insistent call of the guns "give us your best" would call them ere long, but it did. The cloud lowered darker and heavier, and the time of Christmas "pudden'" passed without a sign of conclusion. Practically all Belgium was in German occupation, and many of its architectural treasures were ruthlessly battered into ruins. Red war, red with wanton flame and red with human blood, swept through the country. Brussels was entered by the greatest circus that ever marched in the history of the world, and M. Max, the picturesque Burgomaster, was transferred to a fortress. The encroaching army moved towards Antwerp, and as a last resort one surging tide, that of Father Neptune, was released by the breaking of the dykes to stop the surging human tide, but the armies came through the water and the mud. Along six hundred miles of trench line, from Switzerland to

the sea, that mighty army held the line, assisted by machine guns, barbed wire, poison gas, liquid fire and all the fiendish devices of the devil to destroy human life. On the Eastern frontier there was the same expansion over Poland and Galicia, where the Russians were not properly armed, and where all the propensities of the steam roller were discovered in the backward roll. Russians fought with gun-stocks and staves to wholesale death, and Russians, to help their heavy haulage wagons through the ghastly mire, threw their bodies under the wheels, and the wagons rolled on, smashing poor human frames. The one great cry coming up from those terrible years of war is to every man to do all in his might to prevent war, to tell the children until they never forget, that "Disarm!" must be the twentieth century watchword of nations. We had produced a delirium which affected all civilization: Japan, Turkey, Rumania, Bulgaria and later America came into the vortex, and all life was touched by the shadow.

England by night was put into outer darkness by the extinction of all lights and the complete darkening of every window. Even to smoke a cigar in the street was to evoke suspicion, and to use a flashlight for but an instant was to be deemed a spy. D.O.R.A. came down with heavy tread on every suspected indiscretion, and the very effigy of Guy Fawkes was proclaimed. Eggs vanished from the breakfast table, and food began the upward stride in cost. The cry of "intern them all" rang through the land, and soon 19,000 unhappy aliens, collected quietly by night, even from their beds of down and innocence, were accompanied by new drafts of all male enemy aliens of military age, which, being interpreted, extended from 17 to 55. Some decidedly funny things happened at these internment camps, and the interned displayed wonderful ingenuity in their desire for freedom. The laundry man,

driving his van out of one, noticed the pile of clothes moving in the interior of the van, and quietly turning his horse about, he asked a pedestrian to take note if anything fell off the van. Once inside the stockade he called the guard, and the runaway was dislodged. They burrowed into the ground like rabbits, and did on occasion escape, but nearly always were recaptured. The military correspondent of the period was the sapient "Eye Witness" who treated us to dissertations on how the soldier washed himself with soap, and how supplies increased at the base! Fresh every day came the intimation that Von Kluck, known as "Old Von O'Clock" to the soldiers, was "hemmed in with an invincible ring of steel." Every day the supercilious Crown Prince was utterly routed, and confidentially whispered to have been killed. Over and over again the Austrian Army was annihilated, and as a little variant it was decimated, but it persisted in being alive and formidable. General Von Emmich was a prisoner; no, he was wounded and later he was believed to have committed suicide. As to the Kaiser, the All-Highest War Lord, he grew more sad, more disconsolate, more grey, every day. He had fallen into water and contracted pneumonia, and next his throat had given ominous warning. German schoolboys, aged 13½ to 17, were being hurried into Flanders, it was said, crying as they went, to fight for the Fatherland. Tens of thousands of stalwart Russians, heavily clad in furs, it was stated, were passing through Scotland and England. The delirium had fastened upon the world like a contagion. Mr. Churchill early declared that the German Navy must come out; it must come out to be slammed, or it would be dug out like rats from a hole (loud cheers). There were no strikes in Germany: not ever, our papers said. The German workers were models of patriotic obedience, and

it was only our bad lads who struck. The first air raid was a comedy : it killed a sparrow, a barn-yard cock, and damaged a pig-stye. There were comedies of the brilliant and well-informed secret service, whose agents seemed possessed of supernatural power. One was the arrest of that "safe and sure" messenger, Charles Archibald, carrying a mischievous dispatch from Dr. Dumba, the Austrian Ambassador, to Baron Burion, and the safe and sure Archibald was under quiet observation all the time. There was the frank message of Count von Papen, a German military attaché about "those idiotic Yankees," and the Foreign Office disclosed the little jem, to the great irritation of von Papen. President Wilson described that remark as "a breach of the proprieties," but then he always preserved his dignity. The Bishop of London went into khaki, and vicars went into khaki, and seemed to imagine puttees were episcopal gaiters. But I must not rail at the cloth, for the padre did his part in the Great War. Mr. Churchill did his little bit, too, for he went to join his regiment, and remained joined to his regiment for just a little while.

There were no smiles, however, at the time. Groups of refugees were arriving from Belgium, notably after Antwerp fell, and fifty thousand people assembled to cheer a thousand of these sad and homeless arrivals. Here were infants looking on with wonder at the strange commotion which turned the skies red, and filled the earth with a vibrating roar, that caused all to fly before the terror, and caused a journey across the sea, then a roar of cheering louder than the guns, and good meals and a peaceful bed again. Their sabots clattered along the platform as the long special trains drew in, and motors and other vehicles conveyed them to the Town Hall and the Art Gallery, where beds were laid at the foot of Venus, Mars, Vulcan and the rest of them, below pictures of plains

of peace, and of ministering angels. Here hosts and guests met each other, and soon homes were furnished for tens of thousands of the violently dispossessed. One whom I talked with was specially interesting—Eliza Boucher, of Jemappe, near Mons, aged 92 years. She had seen the German army coming on, ever onward, and then her daughter, a grey-haired woman of 60, took her mother on her back and carried her for two days out of harm's way. They met the British army advancing and then halted in weariness. The soldiers fed them and sheltered them, and passed them through the lines. The great guns began to bark at each other, "but you're all right," said the soldiers, and so to Ostend, where they and others slept in bathing vans which had seen happier days, until a British ship took them safely away. Another effectively described the passing of the German army, a ceaseless tramp of men, horses and guns, for seventeen hours, until it almost drove her mad. And then the British army hastening up, with tired men riding tired horses. There came the train loads of wounded, war's direct victims. At first they came in broad day, and mounted police had to keep the station approaches clear of the multitude assembled to give them welcome. Broken and in some cases dying men were cheered lustily and with all kindness by the people. Then the time changed, and the trains came in by night, eleven o'clock to three o'clock in the morning. It was cold and cheerless and silent then. There were none to cheer, for the novelty had gone. But still they came through the years, and some of us saw them very often. We can read of thousands being wounded and not realize what we read, but to see a hundred wounded gave a full realization of all that was happening elsewhere.

All this time the army was ever growing. On September 10th of 1914 it was stated that 439,000 recruits had enrolled

and provision was asked for another 500,000 men, to bring the total army to 1,200,000 irrespective of Territorial and Colonial troops. Thus rapidly did we rise to the continental standard of armies. Nor were the armies alone involved, for the warfare of the new era involved the whole nation. In that first Christmas the soldiers of both sides fraternised together, sang and played games, for the spirit of Christmas was abroad, mastering for a brief moment the power of the war god. And in the same Christmas the Hartlepools, Scarborough and Whitby were grief stricken and disconsolate by the callous and unpardonable bombardment which slew over a hundred people and wounded hundreds more. There were the air raids, too, against which there seemed no defensive until, on June 7th, Lieutenant Warneford, V.C., brought down a Zeppelin near Ghent, and later they came careering down in England to frightful death, and the great sheets of flame thrilled London. In January they had begun the systematic visitation of the North-East coast, because Dunkirk made it awkward to reach the capital. On May 31st a Zeppelin was over London and serious visitations continued during the moonless nights of September and October. Sixty were killed in a night, and many thousands endured the terror. Night by night in the darkness came the grim experience of awaiting Zeppelins. We became familiar with the sound of distant engines, the frightful crash and the shrieks of anguish and terror. We saw the anti-aircraft guns on motors running about the streets, belching a challenging fire into the dark sky. The search-lights flashed in unison and concentrated on some great silvery hulk, or upon an aeroplane struggling in terror like some poor fly to escape. Barrages were assembled around London, complete with guns, sound discerners and ingenious range finders. On the coast were the same

protective means, but these Zeppelins, Fokkers, Albatrosses and Gothas never returned by those batteries. To the men on the batteries, intensely anxious to defend London, certain leaders of enemy squadrons became known for their skill and daring. Refugees left the terror of East London, with its underground shelters and nights of alarm, for the northern centres, and here I saw them again enduring the terror with Zeppelins to right and left. All our cities and hills on likely routes had their anti-aircraft batteries, with the perpetual nightly vigil kept as faithfully as mothers keep watch over the children. In that winter of 1915–16 concerts and entertainments would be plunged abruptly into darkness, and a manager would request, on behalf of the authorities, "that you will all go quietly home." Then came the confusion of the dark and crowded streets and the silent passing of tramcars in complete darkness, like black phantoms of the night, until all current was cut off, as approach was imminent, and the phantoms paused. In hospitals, in infirmaries and maternity homes they were nerve-racking nights, but England carried on, for light would break again. True we were doing similar things, for "frightfulness" was the passion of the day. Our airmen were Europe's finest, and many a brilliant thing have they done. Our men dropped bombs on Cuxhaven, Metz, Ostend, Zeebrugge, Frankfurt, Mannheim and on the Rhine towns, and we need no longer pretend that only stations, harbours and "lines of communication" were bombed. It was a smash for a smash, a life for a life, the terror of death was riding through Europe.

The same spirit, too, prevailed at sea, and on May 7th of 1915 the great Cunard liner *Lusitania* was torpedoed and sunk by a submarine off the Head of Kinsale, 1,198 lives being lost, the greatest number to be lost from a single

vessel since the ill-fated *Titanic* went down. The world shuddered at the perpetration of such a deliberately planned crime. It was preceded by warnings in the advertisement columns of the American Press that American passengers should not travel on that vessel, but over one hundred Americans lost their lives in the calamity. The success of this terrible enterprise seemed to create a thrill of delight in Germany, and we are told seriously that *Lusitania* medals were struck to commemorate the feat.

> The mills of God grind slowly
> But they grind exceeding small:
> Though with patience He stands waiting
> With exactness grinds He all.

It is beyond our power to estimate, to enlarge or to reduce, the punishment that such crimes entail. England may have wept in sorrow, but she ground her teeth, and the armies felt a new impetus to resist this terror. President Wilson came conspicuously on the scene with his message of May 13th, stating that America was viewing with "growing concern, distress, and amazement" the actions of Germany at sea. Several instances were cited of the loss of American citizens, and on May 30th Germany replied that the *Lusitania* was really an auxiliary cruiser, with guns concealed under her decks, and carrying Canadian troops and munitions, the exploding of which caused her swift sinking. On June 10th President Wilson replied that the *Lusitania* was not armed, and was not acting as a transport. I believe the only element of truth in the German plea was that the *Lusitania* carried certain boxes of munitions. That may have been a mistake, but it did not condone the crime.

Even while this correspondence was proceeding, Lord Kitchener referred in the House of Lords to the need for

retaliation upon the enemy to protect our troops against the asphyxiating gases being discharged by tube and by bomb—the intensely poisonous and deathly nitro-peroxide, and heavy suffocating chlorine. These and the flame throwers involved terrible suffering, but still certain minds are concentrated upon new diabolical weapons. I have an American paper before me describing "Burning Glasses," a new and worse form of spreading terrible death; the French have just acquired the patent of a new gun to exceed by three times the range of the "Big Bertha," which slew people worshipping in Paris on Good Friday from a point 75 miles away. The British vaunt a new tank, more horrible than the tanks of this war, for the discharge of gas clouds. When will civilization stamp out in contempt this research for new forms of destruction?

Mr. Asquith said in the House of Commons on May 12th of 1915 that "a Coalition Government is not under contemplation; I am not aware that it would meet with general assent." But other forces were at work and on May 19th he said "Steps are in contemplation for the re-construction of the Government upon a broader personal and political basis." On May 25th the new Government was introduced, bringing eight Unionists into the Cabinet, and embracing the co-operation of Labour in the business of Government for the first time in its history. A few months later the inner War Cabinet of Five was created, and next the Allied Council of Ministers. As Parliament was very thinly attended, over one hundred members being with the Forces, and as it only sat three days weekly, there was a distinct loss of contact between the Government and the people from that time.

Another very important innovation of the same period was the introduction of the Ministry of Munitions, and

the Munitions of War Act, with Mr. Lloyd George as the Minister. This Act provided :—

(1) That there shall be no strikes or lock-outs during the war.
(2) That skilled men taken away should be brought back from the army to the workshops.
(3) That a mobile Munition Corps be organized.
(4) The establishment of Munition Tribunals.
(5) Leaving certificates to be secured when transfer is desired.
(6) Trade Union methods of restriction of output to be cancelled.
(7) That profits shall be limited.

It must be recognized at once that this Act certainly did expedite the production of shells, aeroplanes, cartridges, rifles, battleship equipment and all other sections of the great paraphernalia of war on the vast scale. Very soon over 2,000 works were under State control, the Tribunals were set up, with chairmen and rota panels of employers and workers' representatives. There were Central and Appeal Tribunals, and I probably attended hundreds of sittings of these new and strange courts. The business was conducted mainly with an admirable impartiality, but it did result in harshness in many cases. Leaving certificates were hard to obtain, and hundreds of men who worked 80 to even 103 hours weekly were fined for broken time. This was due to the late morning habit, for which men made up at night.

No record of this first eventful year of war would be complete without reference to others of those changes creeping over the land. On June 29th the National Registration Bill was introduced, and Parliament in this period displayed a celerity which passed several measures

through all their stages in a single day. Thus a proposal was speedily in operation, and very soon a complete register was being taken of all inhabitants between the ages of 15 and 65. Assurances were solemnly given (see Hansard) that it was not to coerce Labour, and it had nothing whatever to do with military purposes, but it was simply to ascertain our resources. So we all filled up the pink forms, and duly received our cards, and mine, before me now, proclaims its long and close association with the military authorities and the fact that it was used over and over again for conscription purposes. Woe betide the conscript who happened to turn up at the barracks later without his registration card.

Looking back now at that crowded year, one can see clearly the grip of militarism steadily closing over England as a vice grips. On September 14th Lord Kitchener commented on the falling-off in recruiting, and two days later Mr. J. H. Thomas declared that "the first day that compulsory service was introduced, the Government would have to deal with industrial revolution." But the Government didn't. Instead it very skilfully placed the onus upon Labour, through the Labour Recruiting Committee, to find the men or realize conscription was inevitable. Within a month—October 11th—the Lord Derby Group system was launched, enrolling and classifying the ages, and the married from the unmarried, into 46 groups, carrying certain numbers. "We shall never have to go," said Group No. 26. "You must take the young ones first," declared Group 36.

The Press censorship was closing ever more tightly upon the newspapers. There were official reports of air raids, of battles and of explosions at home. It was no use troubling to report events, for your report would be rejected and an official brief and dull report issued. It was

camouflage for Sir John Simon to declare that "the only one reason for the censorship was to prevent the publication of information that might be useful to the enemy." It was to keep the people at home quiet and unalarmed and even ignorant of the truth. Did a graphic letter come from a soldier? It was blackened out by censor number ten thousand or so in France, and "not passed for publication" by the censor in Whitehall. Did the town rock with a picric acid explosion? It was no use going, for your report would not be passed; a paragraph would come along later. Were twenty-three lives lost in the munitions factory close by? No use troubling, for we were all stifled. Did a fire brigade meet with a disaster in quelling a fire after a great explosion? Leave it to the censor: he professed to know best. Sometimes it was justified, but mostly it was ridiculous.

A final word about finances, and we can leave this first great year of war. The Budget of 1914 left a deficit of £334,000,000 and that of 1915 a deficit of £1,285,000,000. These figures included loans to our Allies of £423,000,000. The nation was making a mental effort to begin to think in terms of thousands of millions. Loans unlimited were launched at 4½ per cent., loans to raise a thousand millions, and a full half-year's dividend was promised before half a year had passed. Six hundred millions were raised by that loan, and the first great financial blunder of the war had been made, destined to worry England for the next decade at least. Two Budgets were introduced, by two Chancellors, that year and steeper taxation was imposed, but still the guns called for more and more.

England was launched upon the full stream of the war.

CHAPTER XVIII

A Civil History—Bogus Barbarities—All Lights Out—War and Education—Women in Industry—Scarcity of Doctors—Drink Control—The Tapestry Weavers—Fortunes in Rags.

WE find ourselves launched inevitably now, if this Pageant is to remain faithful to its purpose, upon little less than a civil history of the war, and I fancy that a brief review of all the topsy-turvy conditions that prevailed in Great Britain for three years will be read with absorbing interest in the future. It is probable, too, that many thousands of people who shared with me the remarkable experiences of this period will be glad to have the memory refreshed as to the changing aspects of daily life, which so overwhelmed us during the years 1916 to 1918, so that most of us lost our bearings and only yearned earnestly for peace. Good fathers, I hope, will find it useful when the sons ask how they managed during the Great War, to hand this book over and to say, "It's a long story, sonny, but you'll find a lot of it here." Am I right in imagining that a civil history of this war is as important as some of the military histories which in the last two years have been pouring from the Press? It seems to me that as England figured as the crown and centre of the war resistance to Germany, and supreme importance therefore attached to England, there will always be a keen interest in the story of how the people of England fared during the war of mutual starvation and attrition. As we lead into the depths of

the abyss of war, my particular function shall be to tell of England, and not of the rolling tide of battles.

While many atrocities were perpetrated, and humanity groaned over the agonies of flesh and blood in various parts of Europe, we also had our stories of atrocities which were not true, and did not bear investigation. One morning during the period reviewed in the last chapter, on the Bradford Midland station, a good man remarked to me, "Oh, this awful war. It's enough to drive one mad."

"It is," I answered, "but going mad is of no particular service. It's got on your nerves, I suppose."

"It is dreadful," he responded. "I've just heard of a case this morning of a poor fellow at Leeds who has both eyes put out, and his hands cut off by those beastly Huns. Can you imagine anything more horrible? It is really enough to drive one mad."

"It is a most awful case," I answered. "Where is this man, and who did it?"

"He's in hospital in Leeds and the Germans did it wilfully. A friend of mine knows his father."

"I will search him out," I answered, "it's a barbarity without pardon."

Two hours of close inquiry showed there was no such case in Leeds. "But," said one informant, "I think you've heard the story the wrong way about. I heard of the case, and it's at Netley Hospital, and the father lives at Leeds."

An afternoon of inquiry proved equally abortive. Many people knew it "for a fact," but I was always at the sixth remove from the real father in question. For tea I entered a cafe, tired and discontent with the baffling pursuit. At the table was a townsman who knew everybody, and not a mouse stirred, figuratively, without his knowledge.

"You might well not find the case," he answered, "for

the father himself has been refused admission to the hospital for two days, and only learned yesterday of the horror of these injuries to his son. He lives in Sheffield, and the injured son is at Ilkley. I know that for a fact, because a friend of mine talked with the father at Leeds Station on his return to Sheffield."

"I am very grateful," I answered. "My day may well prove abortive. Will you kindly tell me the name of your friend?"

"Certainly: it was Mr.——"

"Thank you very much," I answered, "within an hour I shall have direct knowledge."

"No, I hardly said that," said Mr.—— when I saw him. "A friend of mine told me he had seen the father in question."

"Would you kindly tell me your friend," I inquired, "because I want to deal with this case."

Further inquiry only left that father as elusive as ever, and inquiry at all those military hospitals which I knew, also proved abortive. There was, happily, no such case, nor was there the dear little Belgian boy with his arms chopped off by a hatchet, whose distressing case caused so many tears of virtuous indignation. These cases were as elusive as those Russians who watered their horses at every other station in England. The delirium was upon us.

Meantime things awful enough to produce delirium were actually happening, and acutely distressing reports came through of the deplorable conditions under which British prisoners were dying at Ruhleben and other German internment camps. "Out of tyranny, tyranny buds," and whilst a merciful dispensation gently effaces from the memory the first poignant stings of tragedy and grief, there remain some things in the history of the day before yesterday which

ought to be recorded in this form. The life of England was steadily passing downward to a condition intensely trying to the national nerve. The war in the air became more acute, and squadrons of great Gotha battle-planes swooped over London in broad day at noon, riddling the city with hundreds of terrific explosions. On moonless nights those great dragons, the airships, cruised over England, passing over Yorkshire and even to the Lancashire coast, as well as over London and the South-East coast. The special constables were peremptorily calling "All lights out" and darkness and silence stole over the country. On nightly vigils I watched the upward flash that indicated the bomb of fatal import, and heard the roars of explosion. The Zeppelins themselves groped in darkness which defeated their gruesome purpose, and were drawn to release numerous bombs on fields by an ingenious arrangement of lights placed in the form of city streets, all radiating from a centre. Their pilots were very wary and fearful, too, for to them these were nights of terror. One night I saw the very alarming spectacle of a serious factory fire that illumined the sky with a red and furious glow, while Zeppelins were actually cruising to right and left of us, leaving their awful brands on village lanes and out-houses, but keeping away from the city, fearful of being lured to a trap!

The war was making serious inroads into our education system. Over a thousand schools were taken over for military purposes, for billeting recruits and nursing wounded. Twenty thousand teachers were soon in the khaki ranks, and universities, training colleges and similar institutions were being drained of tutors and students alike. Many elementary scholars went on half time education, destined to continue until long after the armistice. When all paper imports from Holland ceased, the newspapers began

to diminish in size, and to rise in price. The wonderfully conducted halfpenny papers were no more available at a halfpenny, but became a penny, and the more solid penny daily assumed the dignity of twopence. For the conservation of coal, there was a general demand for electric motive power and single works switched on each morning a load of ten thousand horse power from the generating station. Women began the great transformation from domestic life into industry, until domestic servants were priceless and rare as the dodo, for 150,000 of them marched into the munition factories and clothing factories, to replace the armies of men continuously passing overseas. Uniforms strange and weird made their appearance, and the girl chauffeur emerged, replete with leggings and khaki suit and peaked cap. The training of thousands of nurses was an urgent necessity, and this sisterhood graced the streets with costumes blue and grey, with vivid red crosses and hoods. Women drove express delivery cars, women acted as porters on the stations, women cleaned the engines and carriages, and women, be it added with regret, cleaned boiler flues, the most choking, dirty and unhealthy work to which woman could possibly be assigned. Women conducted our trams and conducted the nation's business, for 200,000 women were the bulwark of the civil service. Later the Land Girls and the W.A.A.C. came on the scene, and gave invaluable service in England and France, in Egypt and far Salonika. A century earlier women had been in industry, badly paid slaves, generally in pit or factory, but during the nineteenth century an enlightened social conscience had gradually limited their services to suitable tasks, and had pronounced home life as their special duty and privilege. But in the hour of need, women closed the household door, and faced a nation's task. They took long night shifts, they filled shells with high explosives,

they turned countless fuses and shell noses, and poured out many millions of khaki suits and overcoats. They tilled the farms, fed the cattle, and drove the motors. Women were ubiquitous, filling every breach, while the Somme, the Aisne, Cambrai, Verdun, Amiens, and many other scenes exhausted our available men. "Carry on!" was the password and "Till the boys come home!" was the consolation. In the isolated and heavily banked up shell filling factories, of enormous dimensions, explosion was not the sole form of risk, and the awful T.N.T. poisoning was sustained by some, while others became yellow of hue, and were lightly called "canaries" for their sacrifice. The poisoning risks were diminished by milk and cocoa, by protective veils and gloves, and they carried on. The Bank Holidays of Whitsuntide and August were abandoned under the sore stress and "massed" holidays were taken late in September, when supplies were big enough to allow them.

Doctors were as urgently required as nurses, and it became unpatriotic to be ill, despite a heavy war-bread that was darker than rye-bread, and was truly "redolent of the stable," as one eminent person thoughtlessly desired it to be. Despite this unattractive bread of wheat, rye, barley, maize, rice and potatoes, and national indigestion, it was no time to be ill, for all doctors under the age of 45 years were asked to enrol for military service. Then their numbers were thinned out from districts under the scheme of the British Medical Association. Those who remained undertook the practices of those who went and gave a guarantee that after the return from war service they would not, for a period of twelve months, attend any patient of the colleague who had been away.

A Drink Control Board had been appointed to reduce drinking tendencies and the times of drinking were very

properly and sharply reduced. Allowances of grain and sugar were rationed to brewers, and a beer famine arose. Topers had touts out to discover where barrels were delivered, and there they foregathered at mid-day and in the evening, to "enjoy" the doubtful beverage available. Big profits and quick returns prevailed in the trade, and at week-ends publicans could take a long farewell to all their greatness, and motor away to the seaside, leaving a conspicuous notice "No more beer till Thursday." There were specified times for the sale of spirits, which also had lost their fire, and "whisky queues" were familiar scenes. But it was at Carlisle that the Control Board launched upon its fullest adventure. There were particular reasons for selecting this area, as the gigantic Gretna munitions factory had drawn to that ancient city an enormous casual population. Here all licensed premises were placed in direct control. Lavish signs and advertisements were all removed, and interiors drastically changed for the better. Managers were encouraged to sell non-intoxicants and food, and the reformed drinking-shop led to a temporary diminution of prosecutions for all forms of offence. A populace that couldn't get drunk displayed no proclivity to offend, and Carlisle became a study for all interested in social reform. In April of 1915 the King had taken a pledge that no wine, spirits or beer should be consumed in any of the Royal Houses until peace was secured, and the vaults were sealed up. This admirable example was not followed to the extent some of us hoped. The newly-rich replenished their liquor stores, and had no thought of reserving it.

The nation was becoming, as it were, a tangle of loose ends, through which it was hard to decipher a pattern. I have watched by the hour those artistic tapestry weavers at the Goblins factory, near to Paris, who toil for years upon

an exquisite picture they seldom see. The reverse side faces them and the spectator, and only a curious medley of colour is visible. But the pattern is being worked out and so did England seem to be working the pattern out in the dark during that trying time. The picture being worked was entitled "Peace and Honour," and millions of weavers held tangled threads of many colours and never paused to see the picture. Indeed, the very men who talked most about the glories of the picture to be had distorted ideas of its beauty. They called it "Victory," called the mountains "Indemnity," and the plains "Territory." This was not the picture the nation was weaving, and some of the oratory led to high disputings. I saw bands of soldiers bang their riding canes and rudely and petulantly interrupt speakers and spoil meetings. Inflamed with fevered descriptions of the picture, they doubted the sincerity of some of the weavers holding quieter tints, but the whole medley went on, and, indeed, still goes on, and not yet is the picture consummated to the point at which it can be turned about and presented to the world for admiring inspection, the glorious creation of a great sacrifice.

Let us, however, look again at the weavers, toiling and enduring. They were in queues for potatoes, and in a vain search for fats, a commodity which rose to supreme importance. Butter was 4s. a pound and hard to find; lard had disappeared and thousands of people lined up for margarine. Over the doors of grocery shops was the conspicuous notice "No butter, no sugar, no tea." The central areas of our cities were congested with long queues of thousands of people, assembling in the snow of the prolonged winter of 1917–18, as early as 8 a.m. to get two ounces of tea, half-a-pound of margarine, and a pound of sugar. There were similar queues at the butchers,

from whose premises fats had disappeared, and where beef was sold at 2s. a pound, and mutton at 1s. 9d. There were even queues for tripe.

Imported fruits were scarce and dear. Occasional consignments of oranges sold in bulk at Covent Garden at sixpence each ; lemons were sevenpence, bananas fourpence, and common pressed dates 2s. 3d. a pound. Christmas of 1917 was one of great sacrifice, for the ingredients of puddings and pies were extremely scarce, and the orange was an expensive luxury. Essentials were only obtained by hours of standing in queues. Children felt the times in the high price of toys, in the disappearance of chocolates, and the rarity of sweets and confectionery. Fancy pastries had gone, and cakes were dull propositions. Essentials had become luxuries, and infants went short of milk. Eggs were prohibitive at fivepence each, and "dried" eggs furnished a substitute at 2s. 3d. a dozen. Pancakes were eclipsed by the lack of four essentials—fats, eggs, sugar and lemons. But probably the unkindest cut of all was made by the modest English rabbit. He astutely hid himself during the crisis, and the few of his race who came forth sold at prices from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. each, until prices were fixed, and then he vanished. Turkeys were 2s. to 2s. 6d. a pound, and geese 1s. 8d. to 1s. 9d. In all other departments of life the same scarcity and dearness was revealed, but food was the most serious matter, as a war of starvation was proceeding on the high seas, and it was having dire effect. At the corn exchanges, cereals rose to a figure undreamed of since the Napoleonic wars, and after import prices were fixed, we had the anomaly of foreign oats commanding more than English wheat. It was a time of the cult of the domestic rabbit, and allotment holders were told that this hobby presented a lucrative prospect as the consumer of waste vegetables. Every city was patched

and belted with innumerable allotment gardens, and every park was laid under the tribute to yield potatoes. The spade displaced the cricket bat and for the first time thousands of artisans had the joy of eating fresh produce of their own growing. But when all turned to household rabbitries and back-garden egg-factories, we discovered that utility rabbits were commanding the price of sheep, 35s. to 50s. each, and pullets were 32s. 6d. each. The harvest of the sea was dislocated by mines and submarines, for the entire North Sea was a war area, and as a result the despised herring rose to the pinnacle of 5s. per dozen, and heavier fish sold at 1s. 8d. to 3s. a pound.

During this very trying time, economy was being sedulously preached from pulpits, cinemas and everywhere that people foregathered. The rag and bone man became a merchant prince, for bones and fat yielded glycerine, and glycerine meant shells. Rags, and especially wool rags, were priceless treasures, the raw material of blankets and garments. Cotton rags and waste paper were just as sedulously collected at the same standard of high prices, to furnish pulp at the paper mills. Old bottles and jars were suddenly exalted into value, and cinders were again consumed to cheer the domestic hearth. Matches were treasures, the lighting of one causing several to run to share its office, and a full packet of cigarettes was a possession to handle fondly with a smile of ownership. While thus reduced in physical stamina, the nation was subject to those periodic waves of a feverish scourge called "influenza" for want of a better definition, and attributed to various causes, possible and impossible. Never were undertakers so fearfully busy, as terrible toll was taken throughout cities and villages. There was the constant sound of firing parties, paying a last salute to the brave dead who had passed away in the hospitals, and military

funerals were daily incidents. Taken collectively, and sad as they all were, these events were but the trappings and the suits of woe, the indication of a world tragedy being enacted, causing loss and anguish that passed all comprehension.

CHAPTER XIX

Conscription of Men—Medical Examinations—The Tribunals—The Departing Hosts—The Engineers' Revolt—Mr. Asquith Resigns—In a Work Centre.

THERE were, however, certain outstanding landmarks, legislative changes of method, which also contributed largely to the visible changes passing over the country, and to this sequence of remarkable events we must now pay heed. In November of 1915 we had entered the last stage of the voluntary system of recruiting, under which every man was expected to wear his khaki armlet, indicating to the world whether he had enlisted ; whether he was medically unfit ; and whether he was already wounded and discharged. Recruiting Committees organized house to house visits to secure attestation, bands played and speeches were delivered, to induce all to enlist. In the great trades there were starred and unstarred men, and all the unstarred were on tenterhooks. Conscription "the ancient and glorious" was being more persistently advocated, and the last Session of Parliament in 1915 saw its introduction. On November 2nd, Mr. Asquith gave an undertaking that single young men would not be allowed to shirk their duty, and on November 11th and 26th he pledged his Government to compel the young single men to serve, if there proved to be a considerable number not enlisted or engaged in necessary national work. This pledge gave the married men greater confidence in attesting, and on January 4th, 1916, Lord

Derby published the figures as to his scheme, which had closed on December 12th. He stated that out of 2,171,000 single men, only 1,150,000 had come forward, and of the remainder 378,000 were starred as indispensable and 651,000 were unstarred. Of the married men, 1,679,000 had come forward, but many were starred and unavailable. These could not be called out while the single men remained free without violating Mr. Asquith's pledge, it was said. Lord Derby wrote : " I am very distinctly of opinion that it will not be possible to hold married men to their attestation unless and until the services of single men have been obtained by other means ; the present system having failed to bring them to the colours."

On January 5th of 1916 the Government introduced the Bill imposing compulsory service on single men, and after a two nights' debate it passed its first stage by 403 votes to 105. The second reading was carried on January 12th by 431 votes to 39, and in the discussion Mr. Asquith said that unless it was passed " we cannot do our duty in the prosecution of the war." The opposition was more effective in argument than its numbers indicate, for it secured the insertion of a clause making provision for the exemption by local tribunals of men found to be truly conscientious objectors to military service, and it drew from Mr. Asquith that poetic assurance that he would conscript " no married man nor widow's son." How these pledges were observed we shall see by the record of facts.

The Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, resigned on the night the Bill was introduced, and a storm arose at once in the Labour Party, which had its representatives in the Government. A special conference of the party was held in London, and decided on the resignations of Messrs. Henderson, Brace and Roberts, but suspended the operation of the decision until after the

Annual Conference at Bristol on January 28th. This conference agreed by a large majority of votes that the Labour co-partnership in the Coalition Government should be maintained. Four days earlier, January 24th, the Bill had passed the House with a minority vote of only 36. The House of Lords treated the Bill with swift celerity, and on January 27th it received the Royal Assent. On February 10th it was brought into operation by a Royal Proclamation posted throughout the land, and high disputings arose at once over those young men still immune because they were in reserved occupations. A great "roll-up" of the youth of the nation had begun, and the married men were startled at the expedition with which the groups were called in series, duly examined, and passed on for rapid training. But the call remained clamant, and on March 2nd Lord Derby called attention to the number of eligible men under 31 years of age who were escaping service. It was next recommended that no single man under 31 years of age should be starred, and that no other men should be starred unless they were in their present occupation before August 15th of 1915, National Registration Day. The inference was obvious to married men, who saw their turn coming more speedily than they had dreamed. On March 15th the House of Commons sanctioned an Army vote for four millions of men, and demands arose for reason in this alarming policy of expansion, while strong protests were expressed against the impending conscription of married men. The first tangible signal for them came on March 20th, and on March 29th compulsion for all men of military age was introduced into immediate politics. On April 19th Mr. Asquith referred to material points of difference in the Cabinet, and added that "if these points are not settled by mutual agreement, the result must a be break-up of the Government." On

April 25th secret sessions of both Houses were held, and on May 2nd Mr. Asquith himself introduced the Military Service, No. 2, Bill, "rendering liable to serve all men, married or single, between the ages of 18 and 41 years." This was carried by 328 votes to 36, and certain efforts were made to make the age limits 17 and 45. A further arbitrary measure was adopted on May 10th compelling all time-expired men to continue to serve for the duration of the war, and all men previously rejected on medical grounds were ordered to further submit themselves for examination. On May 23rd the House of Lords expressed its cordial approval, and Lord Kitchener returned the thanks of the Army Council.

Thus for the first time in the history of England was universal compulsion for foreign service imposed upon the people. The provisions of these Acts allowed for total exemption to conscientious objectors, for non-combatant service by those who objected to carry arms; for work of national importance as an alternative, and as we shortly found, for Wormwood Scrubbs and for various county gaols, re-titled Work Centres, whose warders were designated as instructors and whose prison doctor was metamorphosed into the title "Agent." I always looked upon the eighteen months which supervened as by far the saddest period of the war in England. The Great War itself was certainly giving indications of the turn of the tide. The German onrush had poured itself out like a flood, only to be baffled and broken. It was true now that the entire Central Empires and all their forces were in an invincible ring of steel, and the war of attrition was wearing their heart out. The nefarious and most malicious submarine warfare was being negatived by the wonderful enterprise of the Navy, and the greatest proof of all was the continuous fall in the value of the mark. But at home

there was not an upward tendency in affairs. The Medical Boards were on daily duty at every centre, examining and grading swarms of men. These examinations were repulsive experiences, for the arrangements made to deal with hundreds of men daily were crude and inadequate. Continuous streams of men passed up narrow and dark staircases. I started up a narrow back stair, as one of them, but halfway up came across a long line of waiting men.

"What's all the waiting for?" I asked.

"Waiting for my papers," said the man nearest to me; "I've been here an hour."

Occasionally a man squeezed his way down the narrow stairs past the waiting file. It consisted of policemen, workmen, and others put on the "spare" list, and men hitherto exempted or rejected. Every five minutes we got up another stair, and it was quite an event, a victory, when we got to the landing. "Merrie England," commented one man, bitterly.

Arrived in an upper room at last, we removed our hats and sat down on long forms, moving along the forms slowly as man after man got supplied. Then we had to go downstairs again, and to my surprise I found the narrow stairs still full of men going slowly upward. Military officers, and especially the N.C.O.'s of the old type, are very abrupt, and downstairs we got stentorian orders to "stand outside" in a line. I perceived the line was very slowly moving towards some unknown room in the interior, which was labelled "Medical Board." We would move a yard, then stand ten minutes, and all together spent an hour there in a fearfully draughty passage, on a concrete floor.

After sitting an hour on the steampipes (there was nothing else to sit on, and we were tired out), we reached the room door. "Undo your boots," said a corporal in a peremptory manner. We undid our boots. "Six of you forward

quick there." Six went forward. "Into the cubicles and undress quick!" They went into the cubicles of brown canvas, and emerged ready for the scales, the height record, the doctor's inspection, and a bad cold.

A cinema picture of these groups of men called up for re-examination under the New Act would have made England weep. I mean just a film of the men fully dressed standing listless in the barracks. There were blind men led forward, one-legged men, armless men, deformed men, all sorts of men. Oh! it was a pitiful collection! There were little cripples of feeble frame and big hollow eyes, diseased men, wasted men, and a healthy face was refreshing to look upon. As I looked at that bunch of men crowded together I thought first of some of Victor Hugo's descriptions of Paris slums—I couldn't help myself—and then of the foul industrial cities which had produced these wrecks.

Rejected? Not a bit of it! Nearly all were classified for military service. Not a dozen were rejected, and the one-armed man, the one-legged man, and many deformed men got classified. That process over, our classification had to be authorized and approved by the Colonel. We got dressed again, and after a long wait in a stuffy room, which made my head ache—a very great rarity—this chief of the Medical Board arrived. Then he went to his own room, and we followed, just as you have seen hounds follow the huntsman on a walk. The blind, the halt and the lame and the fit all followed, and eventually he signed our cards. At 5.15 I was out under the blue sky again, breathing the air of heaven, and do you think I felt VERY enthusiastic about enlisting to be a soldier?

At stated periods throughout the day batches of forty left for the great training centres, and "conscript trains" became a regular and dismal feature. There was the intermittent tramp of young men and in a few cases their

fathers, too, towards the stations, to feed the colossal war machine. The Medical Boards tested the faculties and physique of the men and graded them in accordance with fitness for (1) fighting lines; (2) garrison duty abroad; (3) garrison duty at home, and (4) clerical or sedentary work. Many of the men examined were old at 45, and large numbers of those between 35 and 45 were allotted to general labour battalions.

The next stage of the process for the unwilling conscript was the appeal to the local tribunal, which was supplemented by the Advisory Committee and the Appeals Tribunal. The young men appearing here filed in very much after the manner of artistes appearing on the stage for a brief period, to interest the gallery, which in the early period was crowded, and a year later was empty. Some of these hearings were poignant studies in psychology. There were many conscientious objectors, but the Tribunals were unable to believe them. Chairmen quoted the scriptures, and asked an inordinate number of questions. Amongst the cases I personally saw, were seven of the young men who later were condemned to death for refusing military duty in France, after they had all been turned down with contempt by the Tribunal as not proven. They proved themselves later, for after sentence of death had been commuted to imprisonment, I saw the same men again at their tasks in prison, working cheerfully and reproving none. There were appeals on domestic and business grounds, but here the daily routine was the brief exclamation "M.A." (military authorities) over widow's son and widower alike. Always the consolation of the relief of civil liabilities was used to discount domestic appeals, as if subsistence were the sole felicity of the household. Staffs were depleted and homes distracted in those poignant months. Mothers made tragic appeals and fathers displayed feeling, but the

machine set up by the authorities worked for the authorities, and thus were the armies supplied with man power.

As the months of this effective process passed by, there naturally arose the question of making the best use of the remaining man power, and distribution boards and national service schemes followed on. The old Volunteer Forces Act of 1863 was revived, and volunteers for home defence were equipped and trained, and persistently weeded out for the more active forces. Corpulent aldermen became majors, and attended their civic duties in the glory of uniform. The same process of weeding out was sedulously applied to the special constables, and the tightening process continued to perfect its grip throughout 1917. In the same week that America declared war upon Germany and joined the Allies, a third Military Service Bill was introduced to deal with a million men who were out of the army on grounds not considered adequate. It provided that no more men were to be taken from agriculture, which for twelve months had suffered acutely from the shortage of men, and it specified that exempted men should be called up every six months for re-examination. Under the Man-Power Bill, which Mr. Henderson introduced on February 15th, and which received the Royal Assent on March 28th, Mr. Neville Chamberlain became Minister of National Service, and an extensive and most expensive campaign began for the re-shuffling of a million men. Everybody was asked to enrol for national service anywhere, and there was only a cool response. Mr. Henderson openly gave warning of compulsion, but still little heed was paid, beyond the passing of a few strike resolutions, in case the new form of compulsion was applied. The Department was a failure, for a skilful attempt had been made to tune the nation up too far. War weariness and work weariness had alike set in, and Mr. Lloyd George, who had just secured the

Premiership, knew discretion to be the better part of valour. The Ministry was abandoned, only to be superseded by a measure designed to reach the object in view, the "comb-out" of the munition works. This further Munitions Act cancelled the "trade cards," hitherto issued by trade unions to members on skilled work. It was held that many young men were still under the protection of these cards, but the engineering trade unions, who had seen workshop dilution carried to a fine art, would not assent to the absorption of all skilled men, and on May 14th they came out on strike. Every kind of fierce denunciation was hurled at them, and the Press held them up to the contempt of the army, but the patience of the engineers really had been sorely tried. The official policy seemed based on the impression that after a year on the rack the working community had no resistance power left. It was exemplified by the refusals of Dr. Addison, as Minister of Munitions, to meet the deputation of Shop Stewards, and by the arrest of seven prominent leaders of the revolt. There had been previous episodes of the kind, when a band of Clyde workers were deported, ending in David Kirkwood's dramatic appearance at the Labour Party Conference. There had been the Wheeldon trial at Derby, disclosing a world of Alec. Gordon's and secret agents of whose mischievous work the public was only just learning. But this suppressive policy had gone too far, and the engineers were out in all the large centres. During those very trying days our "ruling class" resorted to mean and sordid ways of eavesdropping, instead of bracing themselves like men to meet face to face that all essential element in our national life—Labour. In disputes of this kind one can always stake all on democracy. The men won, the strike leaders were released, an understanding was reached about the dilution clauses, and leaving certificates were abandoned.

A commission of inquiry into industrial unrest toured the country, in eight panels, hearing hundreds of witnesses, and eventually returning a report, and that is all the space it is worth.

The engineers were very much abused in the Press, and Tommy at the front, knowing only one side, got an idea that the men of England were deserting their colleagues overseas. Many of them came to see me about it, and one wrote thus :—"We sleep in wet clothes ; we lie down to rest in the mud, and the rats run over us ; we stand up at the firing line with water to the waist ; we are being crippled for life with rheumatics ; and we break hard biscuits under our heels for food. And are these men going to let us down after all this ?"

Decidedly not, but it was a malicious policy that distressed these men by letting them think so I have no wish to cherish reproach, but methods were used in that crisis which went deeper than unfairness.

It is essential to look backward a short time to the last month of 1916, to the change of Prime Minister. It can be summarised *like this :—*

On December 1st Mr. Lloyd George proposed a small *uncontrolled* War Committee, giving plenary powers to the small inner Cabinet of five previously created.

On December 2nd Mr. Asquith declined to accept.

On December 3rd Mr. Asquith advised the King to accept a reconsideration of the Cabinet.

On December 4th the resignations of Ministers caused reconsideration by Mr. Asquith.

On December 5th Mr. Asquith resigned and Mr. Bonar Law was asked to form a Cabinet.

On December 6th Mr. Bonar Law declined with thanks.

On December 7th Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister and was heartily cheered.

Correspondence between the retiring and in-coming Premiers was disclosed in an American journal, *The Atlantic Monthly*, in January of 1919, and it appeared almost simultaneously in a Northcliffe Sunday journal. It was a great scoop, and it would be interesting to have the inner story of how it was arranged. The circumstances surrounding the sudden and unexpected change will probably never be satisfactorily cleared up until Mr. Lloyd George passes out as a political directing force. Mr. Asquith continued to enjoy confidence as the essential voice of the nation in international affairs, and it was his pronouncement as much as President Wilson's Fourteen Points which caused Germany to halt in her ways, and to realize that raging, tearing war was vain and mad.

Let us look for a moment at the operation of the Military Service Acts. They were sweeping up all and sundry, "duke's sons, cook's sons" into the ranks or—into prison. The army embraced vast numbers of fine men, along with many who were mentally or physically defective. The "C.O.'s," as the conscientious objectors were called, were sent to barracks and there refused to parade. They were tried by court-martial and duly sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. They were placed in cells dark and cold, and in some cases were brutally handled. They were given bread and water and locked in irons. They were flung isolated into guard-rooms full of soldiers with the same motive as flung Daniel into the lion's den, but the soldiers were never animals. They differed, but they proferred blankets instead of blows, and discussed the position round the fire. These young men suffered acutely, physically and mentally, for conscience. They were transferred from prison to prison across England under escort, and the "escort" trusted them so implicitly as to leave them frequently. Renewed sentences, even of two

years' hard labour, made no difference. One or two died, but the nation didn't mind, for what were they amongst so many? Thousands entered the county gaols, which were cleared of convicts for them. Here I saw them doing "work of national importance," making mats, mailbags, and cloth for prison raiment. There were farmers and gardeners interned here for years, while the nation needed food. There were sorely needed teachers here, a few doctors and lawyers, and men of high and low degree. Artists and artisans worked side by side for eight hours at the mat-frames or on the looms. They made ropes for ships on the rope-walk in the dark prison; they cooked all the food in the bakery, and laundered all the clothes But it was dark in prison and unhealthy, and these young men emerged from the ordeal more shaken mentally and physically than many of the soldiers emerged from the war, but they hadn't taken the risk. It was dull in prison as I was saying, and the cell windows were narrow like the cells. A physician went one day to see a poor fellow who was very ill. "I don't feel in the mood to bother with these fellows" he was saying as he approached. "Why fetch me to a C.O., when the gallant lads need me more. These are all mental cranks, you know, and shooting's an easy cure. That's what they would have in Germany, you know." And then he entered the portals, and looked down those long radiating corridors, disclosing hundreds of cell doors at one glance.

"This is dark," he said, "and unhealthy. How many men have you here?"

"Six hundred and eighty, sir."

"In this building! this darkness reeks with tuberculosis This is not good enough. Show me the bedrooms."

"These are they, sir, these cells."

"Just a little wider than the length of my umbrella

Wretched. Tell you what it is, an Englishman likes a little murder, but he doesn't like a lot, and this is a lot!"

The physician secured the release of his patient and several others, and secured various reforms. One afternoon when I was there, a "prisoner" became mentally unbalanced, and had to be removed to the asylum. It was all very depressing, for it was a symbol of intolerance and of persecution. The guiding principle of the apologists for this waste of men seemed to be that sacrifice should be demanded of them, and with that one need not quarrel, but the system devised caused the nation to lose and sacrifice most. In accordance with the principle of sacrifice it sent young men from businesses where they were essential to work as farm labourers in isolated villages, to learn an occupation on which they were as children. It sent experienced young farmers to make cloth on prison looms. Surely the sacrifice might have been more profitably imposed. I suppose it suited the mood of the nation, for in various cathedral cities, always delectable spots for breadth of view and tolerance, the sacrifice of the C.O. was increased by various molestations. Nor would I present all C.O.'s in the raiment of angels. There were those who were not so.

CHAPTER XX

Days with the Wounded—The Gallant R.G.A.—England, Queen of the Sea—A Soldier's Ghost Story.

I STILL feel a veneration for Tommy. I got to know him in all his phases, and I wish now to take you with me to see him in hospital, to hear him talk after sleep, nature's sweet restorer, has cradled him back to a degree of health again. You have been there? Yes, I have not the least doubt you have, and if you have not you have missed one of the great experiences of your day and generation. Suffering has a refining influence and there was suffering, volumes of it, of the most acute type, during the period I have been describing. As it was impossible to take hospitals of the dimensions required to the soldiers afield, it was decided to bring the soldiers to the great hospitals fully equipped for them here. The special boats chartered for this great service were most carefully appointed for their work, and every railway company had its fleet of specially built ambulance trains which conveyed patients from the ship's side to the centre appointed. These trains excelled anything previously attempted in that respect. Specially sprung and designed as one continuous ward, they were yet carefully sectionalized, to secure the maximum of comfort for the various types of patients. Many times in the stillness of night I have seen the bugler announce the arrival of a hospital train, and at the call fifty men stand

to fifty ambulance motors drawn up on the platform. Another fifty, hospital orderlies, came forward to meet the train, which draws gently to a stand, its great red crosses showing vividly under the arc lights. Doors are quietly opened, and the careful work of lifting and stretcher bearing begins. The wounded who can walk proceed to appropriate cars, and strong arms are ready to assist the lame and halt. Voluntary nurses pass along the train, doing countless little services for men exhausted by the long journey. Soon the cars are speeding away through the night to the great hospital, where the trying ordeal of wound dressing and often of immediate operating begins. The staff displays great fortitude and not a person halts for a moment until every patient is made comfortable. What a luxury ! How profuse are their thanks as they settle down to sleep ! Some we know will not be with us long, for mortal injuries are taking deep effect, but the great majority are being nursed back to a degree of health. More than once I have gone into one of our largest military hospitals full of cheer and I have felt the impulse of health and spirits passing into my friends, but I have emerged like an invalid, leaving something of me there, and I have wept, nor cared to face the world until normal control returns. What indescribable things they endured and how cheery the sightless man and the legless man were. There was a sanctity about some of those wards which a cathedral rarely touches. Then steadily emerges the happier stage, at which they may leave their beds and go out, it may be on crutches or in many bandages, to look at Blighty. This is the time to hear them talk over tea, or in deck chairs outside, or perchance sitting up in bed. Here is a big blue-eyed fellow who came from a good position in Liverpool when England called for men. He is looking across the ward at another big fellow, who sits by his bed in that familiar suit of hospital

blue. Evidently he is inclined to talk, but hardly knows how to open up.

"What were you in?" he asks at last.

"The Dorsets," replies the other big fellow in blue; "you been out long?"

"Eighteen months there before Jerry got me."

"What were you in?" asks the Dorset man.

"R.G.A., 23rd Battery," replies the big man in bed.

"Harry," roars the big Dorset man. "Harry, here. This chap's R.G.A. Shake, old lad, if you can. Let's have it. The gallant R.G.A. The big lads with the big guns. Come, Harry, shake hands with the R.G.A."

Harry limps up the ward, his face wreathed in a kindly smile.

"R.G.A., Tom? We owe them a bit, I reckon. How goes it, mate, getting better?"

"Nicely," says the big R.G.A. man in bed. "Did our chaps suit you, then?"

"Suit, lad! I should just think they did!" exclaimed Tom. "If it wasn't for you big lads with the big guns Harry and me wouldn't be alive to-day. You'll never hear a wrong word about the R.G.A. in our lot. How the devil they got to know about us beats us, but they saved us."

"Where was that?" asked the man in bed, smiling at their enthusiasm.

"It was last April, at Poperinge."

"I was there," said the R.G.A.

The two others bent over him.

"Was you with the big guns one morning when about 150 of us got astray, and nearly a thousand Germans came across for us? We stood on that firestep fairly petrified. All we could do was to die game and, by God, we would have done that. Right enough, we thought our number

was up. We were the death or glory boys, we were, and we got rifle sights ready without a word. Just then, mate, we heard a noise over our head like a tramcar running along a street. We knew what it was, by the Lord we knew, and shout! Wonder they didn't hear us at G.H.Q. That shell made a big hole in the Germans when it burst, and before the cloud was off them the tramcar noise came double and two more burst. Every man jack of us shouted 'God bless the R.G.A.' but how the hell they thought about us little lot caps all. Put your hand there again, mate! God bless you and every man of 'em.

"But how did you do it? And you was there and now you're here."

"I remember it," said the man in bed, now addressing quite a group gathered round. "One of our observation men put an urgent call on, and our battery officer fixed the range. We had to let go quick and heavy. I'm No. 1 of the gun team, so I knew something about it. We heard afterwards we'd touched the spot, and right glad I am. We don't have our lads bruised if the R.G.A. can help it."

"You don't that," said the affected Tom. "The shells knocked 'em out nearly to the last man. So long as we're in this place we're pals, mate."

"I've known our chaps," said the R.G.A., "to stand to their guns three days and three nights without a rest when the front line was in trouble."

. . . . .

Here is a young fellow who was a mechanic in the sugar mills of the West Indies. "I like England," he said. "When I went out to the Leeward Islands I fancied the hot sun and blue seas and golden strands, but for the rest of my days give me England. I've been out gathering

wild roses, and how lovely they are. A month ago it was all red and white May blossoms, and they are pretty, but your green fields and little brooks are more glorious still. When I was coming to England to enlist I smelt the crisp air 800 miles away. Games began on the ship, and men no longer lay idling about. The captain said it was always the same when we met the English breeze. It puts life into men, and I can see now that the British climate is not so bad after all. It fits men for any part of the world and gives you a taste of every part. Your singing birds are grand, too. I haven't heard anything like it for years, and I'm for England in future. I want to see a snowstorm, and skating, and a regular old fog."

. . . . .

"Ever seen a ghost?"

The question was put to me by a very pale young fellow lying in bed with his legs in splints.

"No," I answered. "I have never seen a ghost."

"Do you believe in ghosts?"

"No."

"Shall I tell you about a ghost I saw?"

"By all means, old boy."

"Well, I belong to the Queen's Bays, and in April of 1917 we had a very bad time. We were holding a very hard bit of front, and gas attacks and liquid fire had just about given us a fit of the blues. We aren't cowards, you understand, but when you've seen lads dancing in agony, and screaming while their cheeks and breasts are frizzling from a spray of liquid fire, you don't feel very cheerful. After a specially bad dose one day I was told off for sentry duty at a sacrifice post, well up to the German lines. I got there all right and had just behind me one of our electric boards for sounding an alarm in the rear if anything was moving. It was a very cold night, and

I could hardly handle the rifle. After watching into the darkness for some time, I thought I saw something coming towards me from the German lines. I sighted the rifle and watched very carefully. You can laugh at me if you like, but that figure was dressed all in white, and it walked straight towards me without making any sound. My hands were already numbed with cold and the rifle lay on the parapet. I hadn't the power to raise a finger and my throat was dry like a board. This white figure walked across close by me, went to a tree, and threw a rope over the lowest branch. Then it drew itself up into the tree, and disappeared in the trunk. I had let a sniper in, and felt horrible about it. I was just thinking about the sounding board when my sergeant came crawling along. 'Anything doing,' he asked. 'Yes,' I said, 'I've got the wind up. A German sniper dressed in white has gone into that tree, so look out.' All at once the sergeant gripped my arm like a vice, and trembled. 'Hist,' he said. 'My God, what's coming?'

"I looked over the parapet, and a second white figure was coming along the same track as the first.

"My sergeant groaned and dropped his head on his arms. I felt equally helpless, and the use had gone out of my knees. The second white figure crossed to the tree, a rope was lowered down and he was helped up. Then he disappeared with the first.

"'Get down,' whispered my sergeant. 'They'll have us. Where's your alarm board?'

"I indicated where it was and he pressed his shoulder against it. We were too cold to use hands, so he pushed his shoulder into it. Then we kept down in the water and mud and waited. Dawn was just coming when a dozen of our fellows came walking up single file, bayonets fixed, watching every foot.

"'What's up?' asked their sergeant.

"My sergeant explained.

"'Cheerio,' said our relief, 'they won't want any shrouds, if that's it; which tree?'

"'That tree, there on the left.'

"'Can't see any tree! Never mind, we'll go and look!'

"You believe me, sir, there was no tree at all, but my sergeant saw it and I saw it, and we saw the men, and they were all ghosts."

. . . . . .

There was an American ward in one of these large hospitals which I visited, and here American Officers and men were nursed by Canadian and American voluntary nurses. It was often a jolly ward and it was here I got an American's impression of England.

"Waal, you're just a nation of good sports, I guess," said this broad faced lieutenant. "It's a great country, is England, and London has a few little things to show. I just reckon your St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey and Houses of Parliament are some show. But I guess the biggest thing I have seen in England was the mouse that crossed Fleet Street."

"A mouse that crossed Fleet Street?"

"Yaas, that was just about the biggest thing I saw in London. That durned mouse wanted to be on the other side, and he starts off from one pavement, just in front of a motor bus. What a nation of sports! Durned if that driver didn't clap his brakes on enough to bring the bus over, puts out his arm to stop the traffic behind, and tells that mouse to look quick! And it did. A taxi driver coming up the other side stopped short, and fetched everybody up behind him. All eyes were on the mouse, and when it got across, the Red Sea flowed on again,

but I reckon that was the biggest thing I saw in London."

There were numerous souvenirs and pets in the hospital, despite all regulations and stringency at all the ports.

One came across a kitten from an Ypres cellar and a puppy from Mons, carried affectionately, even on stretchers and in kit bags. What matron could cast them out then? Thus many wards were full of romance, and boasted their mascots.

CHAPTER XXI

The Profiteers—Ration Cards—Many Controllers—The Paris Resolutions—The Russian Revolution—America Joins Up—Compulsion Still—The Lansdowne Committee—The Armistice.

THE great lesson of war is to be in trade. It proved so during the Crimean War, during the Franco-German War of 1870–71, and during the South African War. Macaulay and Gladstone had both in their day complained strongly against the profiteering practised by traders, large and small, during war periods.

Mr. Gladstone had declared in 1854: "The practice obtaining in all former wars has been no less distinguished for the opportunities it afforded to contractors than for the opportunities it afforded to heroes. It afforded to contractors an opportunity for erecting colossal fortunes." It was always the people who suffered the hardship. Profiteering is but a matter of degree controlled by opportunity and conscience, and it is useless to expend vituperation upon individuals. Profiteering is a recognized phase of our system, and it swells into opulence at times like the crisis of war. The Great European War with which we are dealing is the world's classic example of such an opportunity used to the full. One of the amazing features of the war period was the vast army of newly rich, who rapidly acquired large fortunes by handling some essential commodity, be it ships, cotton, wool, milk or coal. This trading com-

munity was computed to have increased its wealth by five thousand millions sterling during five years, and it protested vigorously when, in 1916, the Budget embraced the principle of the taxation of excess profits. In this case we had not simply the principle of taxing socially created values, but we had the principle vigorously applied, by taxation up to 60 per cent. of the excess profits. Then began a series of devices intended to obviate that taxation by spending the money on "necessary" extensions, renewals and improvements. In accordance with the size of the firm, the excess profits were spent on new factories or new typewriters and desks, for goods had a real and appreciating value, while paper money had not. Nearly all enterprises paid out record dividends to shareholders, and many pages of such figures could be quoted. Every centre furnished its own stories of sudden affluence, and every trade had its romance of lightning prosperity. The consequence was that as 1917 passed into 1918, two worlds were presented to view, and between them was a distinct cleavage. There were those on fixed salaries or wages, not in the swim of this sudden tide of plunder and unable, as they did not belong to a powerful trade union, to secure a salary commensurate with the ever-increasing cost of living. Their standard of life went down conspicuously, for they found the prices of all but essentials were prohibitive, and mere essentials were at prices undreamed of five years earlier. Continued and loud declamation against the profiteers brought them no relief, and the most fortunate workers were those who belonged to the big battalions and were able to secure what they called a share of the plunder. Never a day passed for five years without some demand for more money from some trade union being heard before the Committee on Production. That method offered a ready but superficial means of keeping pace, but every time the

effect was to send prices higher still, until they attained dizzy and impossible heights. It seemed impossible to hold this sectional haste to participate in the big profits, and throughout the whole series of thousands of claims I only recall one concerted movement by a big battalion that could be described as praiseworthy by the entire community. It was the demand put forward by the Engineering and Allied Trades Committee in the summer of 1917 for a reduction of 50 per cent. in the cost of living. How well I recall that long day of discussion, when ninety delegates, representing a membership of 300,000 in some forty-five important engineering centres, framed their programme of demands. This was an engineers' war as much as a soldiers' war and the henchmen of the powers that be were out and about, anxious to discover what coup portended. The ultimatum, dispatched the same night, had most beneficial effect. It was obviously impossible to bring down the cost of living by 50 per cent. in the time limit of six weeks, or in six years for that matter, but efforts were made, and the more equitable system of rationing, to which I am now passing, synchronized remarkably with that unexpected movement. But mainly we had a clear and ever widening cleavage between two worlds, the profiteers and their victims. Never did fur coats have such a vogue, and never did they reach such prices. Every town had its story of the "munitionette" who put down 45 guineas for a coat, and halted to choose a better. Every town related with unction the tale of the engineer who bought six pounds of fresh salmon at 8s. 6d. a pound and remarked, in parenthesis, that he had "fifteen quid a week to get through somehow." These, and variants of them, were general, but they were as elusive as those Russians, and the lads with their eyes put out. Largely they were a sickly detraction from the real and very serious profligacy

going on. While gold had disappeared from the coinage it was abundant at the jewellers, whose windows were brilliant with gems, and whose businesses were never so prosperous. Watch repairing was a despised art of the bad old past, for everybody could afford the new fangled wristlet, whose diminutive dial was often studded with small diamonds. The sales of these articles ran into millions. Automobile makers increased and multiplied, and were liable to intoxication from prosperity, having enough vehicles ordered at high prices to keep them fully occupied to the end of 1921. While men and machines had been conscripted, money was left free, and it floundered into license. The talk of "equality of sacrifice" had become a dreadful irony, for a million people emerged from this war enjoying such affluence as they had never comprehended when the war began. Millions of others saved in a minor degree by their own efforts, while the great majority emerged infinitely poorer, and facing the sad realization of a permanently empty chair.

Food for the people was, however, the grave consideration during the long period of unrestricted submarine warfare. Two great and related nations had taken a strangle hold of each other. Our ships were vigilantly tightening the blockade of Germany, Lord Robert Cecil being appointed Blockade Minister with Cabinet rank. German submarines made life at sea hideous by their promiscuous sinking of ships proceeding towards England or France. By marvellous organization a safe passage was maintained between these two countries, with occasional delays when these sharks of the deep were prowling. It was in November of 1915 that Mr. Runciman announced the almost immediate appointment of a Food Controller, who would be given wide powers of action to meet circumstances under Orders in Council. Lord Devonport was the first holder of this

unenviable position and he did not distinguish himself by conferring any particular benefit upon the public. The voluntary scheme of rationing first proposed was superficial and ineffective and stronger measures had to be taken. Hoarding was severely punished in many cases, and meat, bread and sugar came under strict survey. The people were not adhering to the 4 lbs. of bread or flour, 2½ lbs. of meat and three-quarters of a pound of sugar, stipulated under the voluntary system as the weekly personal allowance. On February 23rd of 1917 the Corn Production Act, designed to bring three million extra acres under the plough, was introduced, giving guaranteed prices of crops and guaranteed wages to labourers. On April 4th the Government assumed complete control of bread stuffs and on the following day 261 flour mills came under State direction. Lord Rhondda became Food Minister on June 15th and made some effective changes. Hotel meals had already come under restriction, as to the number of ounces of bread and meat allowed at a meal, and in popular cafes a price limit of 1s. 3d. exclusive of beverages had been fixed. In September maximum prices were fixed for articles of daily diet. Butchers were allowed a retailer's profit of 2½d. per pound and grocers were allowed the same on butter, when they saw any. Sugar cards were printed by the million for issue in October and warning was given of sharp measures to stop speculation. The Ministry of Food became a most elaborate department for assuming control and fixing prices and *The National Food Journal*, the official medium for its innumerable orders, appeared. Food Control Committees were set up in all centres, to assume local control, and compulsory rationing was instituted. The Food Office became an essential and lively department in every town and the sugar cards came into complete operation on January 1st of 1918. They worked with

great facility and caused none of the expected troubles. The system was therefore applied to other articles and after Lord Rhondda's death, which occurred in July of 1918, books of coloured and gaily designed coupons were in regular use by all householders. The butcher clipped his coupons for the ration allowed per person and the grocer took his for tea, sugar, lard, butter or margarine and the rest. Bread was unlimited, a very wise measure. The Food Ministry was one of the miracle creations of the war and its machinery continued in operation during the present year (1920).

Coincident with the Food Ministry was the creation of the Pensions Ministry, formed to conduct the very extensive system of pensions and allowances to discharged soldiers and to the dependants of the fallen. From crude beginnings the local pay centres developed into most extensive and highly organized departments, run on business lines, under the advice of Local Pensions Committees, all under the wing of the Ministry. They undertook a great deal of after care work amongst the vast numbers of direct victims of the war, and their operations to-day are extremely interesting and valuable.

We had, indeed, a plethora of Controllers, Commissions and Parliamentary Committees, but it is essential to mention that the Coal Controller appeared shortly after the Food Controller, holding very extensive powers over the coal industry and over the price and amount of coal supplied. The number of rooms occupied formed the basis of the annual tonnage allowed and here again a hoarding tendency led to piquant prosecutions.

Free Trade as a national system became decidedly unpopular with a certain section during the war, and the "never again" vow included the pledge to never again trade with the Central Powers. An Economic Conference

of the Allied Governments was held in Paris, in June of 1916, and it made certain recommendations to each of the Governments affected. These came under the following three heads :—

(1) Measures for the War Period.
(2) Transitory measures for the Reconstruction Period.
(3) Permanent Measures.

The Conference recommended the Allied Powers to unite in devising means to re-establish the countries suffering from war destruction ; not to extend the most favoured nation treatment to enemy countries for some years after the war ; to help each other with trade outlets and interchange of resources ; to combine against enemy dumping ; to render the Allied nations independent of enemy products ; and to improve means of transport and communication between the Allied countries.

The nation sustained a notable loss on June 5th of 1917, when the *Hampshire* was sunk by a mine off the Orkneys on a dark, stormy night. Those lost included Lord Kitchener, Minister for War, for whose journey to Russia the vessel was specially chartered. He had attended War Councils in Rome, Paris and London and was proceeding to visit Petrograd, as the Tsar had renamed his capital, to meet the Russian Ministers and to inspect the Russian front. Upon assuming office, Lord Kitchener had issued that admirable appeal to all soldiers to withstand temptations and to remain true to high traditions. His strenuous life of " Deeds, not words," had been intensely strenuous during two years past, and, like Nelson, he fell at sea in the height of the storm, just when the tide was turning. For the German Navy it may have been a great coup, for Lord Kitchener was directing affairs with an iron will, and was greatly missed.

The announcement of the Russian Revolution startled this country in March of 1917, owing to the suppression of foreign news by the censor. In February, Lord Milner had been visiting the Tsar and the Russian Government, which was at that time shaken by the murder of the monk Rasputin, two months before. Russia is a vast territory, and it was badly organized for the exigencies of war. Her troops were as sheep led to the slaughter, and her civil population was starving. On March 9th food riots began in Petrograd and for three days fighting proceeded in the streets, the troops joining forces with the people. On March 15th the Tsar abdicated, and three days later the British public was only briefly told that one tremendously startling fact, with the addition that the new Russian Government would carry on the struggle with the Allies. In his act of abdication the Tsar said, "In these decisive days in the life of Russia, we have thought that we owed to our people the close union and organization of all its forces for the realization of rapid victory: for which reason, in agreement with the Imperial Duma, we have recognized that it is for the good of the country that we should abdicate the Throne of the Russian State, and lay down the supreme power."

The same deed bequeathed the heritage to his beloved brother, The Grand Duke Michael. It was signed in the presence of two representatives of that Duma, which on March 12th he had ordered to close down, and Kerensky instantly superseded the Grand Duke Nicholas as the Russian figure of central interest. To reduce columns of verbiage to Chinese brevity, he was "good feller, bad feller, good feller," by turns, but it became obvious that Russia had terminated her war enthusiasm. In August the Royal family were removed to Siberia under close escort, the Bolsheviks assumed power from the first

Provisional Government, and Lenin advocated a separate peace. Disintegration set in and Russians were captured by ten thousands. A few months later the Tsar shared the fate of Charles I of England with whose life, policy and national conditions there is an interesting comparison, and Russia made its separate peace of Brest Litovsk, a peace that did the Allied cause infinite service as a proof of the German intent if it secured the power.

I have said several times to audiences that a nation's literature tells its history, and applying this to Russia we find that an illiterate darkness cloaked that country for five centuries. With the coming of the nineteenth century came Pushkin, Nekrasov, Tolstoy, Lermantov and other proclaimers of a new world. Songs of freedom were whispered from village to village across those vast provinces, and a sentiment had been implanted which was destined to survive violence greater than that of the French Revolution.

The excitement over Russia led to the National Socialist Convention of vivid memory at Leeds, in June of 1917. Many needless fears were entertained of what might supervene, and hotel accommodation was refused to delegates. Mr. Robert Smillie presided over eleven hundred delegates assembled from all parts of the British Isles. The speakers indulged in high rhetoric and strong declamation, and four resolutions were carried with enthusiasm. The first hailed the Russian Revolution ; the second called on the British Government,which had already recognized Venezelos and his agents, to recognize the Russian Government ; the third was of an omnibus character for free speech, free press, a general amnesty for all political and religious prisoners, and the end of compulsion ; the fourth resolution, which seemed to cause so much quaking, called for Workers and Soldiers' Councils in all urban and rural

areas, and defined their duties. It was carried unanimously, as were the previous three, and nothing further happened. It was harmless, but it was not useless. It served as a reminder that there is a limit to suppression in England.

While Russia was passing out, America was passing in as an Ally. On February 3rd of 1917, diplomatic relations between the U.S.A. and Germany were severed and further events caused President Wilson, on March 5th, to declare that America might be drawn on to the reasserting of her rights. In the same month her merchant ships were armed, and on April 2nd President Wilson made the famous speech to Congress, "we are now about to accept the gage of battle with this natural foe to liberty." On April 6th President Wilson signed the declaration of a state of war, and made his appeal to the citizens. Very shortly Admiral Sims was in European waters with the American warships, and a few months later vast American armies were passing through England on their way to the front. Great as was their assistance, that of President Wilson was greater. What several statesmen had done during the nineteenth century in national affairs, by holding up a loftier outlook to the people, it remained for him to do in international affairs. His utterances were magnificent, and must be the charter and ideal for like-minded men to translate into life. He came to Paris, London, Manchester and other centres and was broken, I believe, body and soul, by the machinations of diplomats of the old type. He was a giant of intellect and motive amongst the Allies, but returned to America exhausted, mentally and physically dismayed by Europe. Batteries crumbled before his assault of words, and whole armies trembled at the issues he expressed.

Even while light was breaking, and there were halting

beliefs and hopes expressed that the end was near, compulsion continued its stern course in England. The military age was raised to 50 and then to 55, and the calling up notice was shortened to seven days. Exemptions were only allowed on medical grounds, and all men were deemed to have enlisted. Workshop pressure was just as severe as was the military pressure. July 6th of 1918 was known as Industrial Conscription Day, for all men were asked to enrol as War Munition Volunteers. An embargo was placed upon the engagement of skilled men and the posting of a notice to this effect by a Coventry firm led to another strike of engineers in many centres in the last week of July. Even while the Ministry of Munitions was effecting a settlement, Mr. Lloyd George breathed out threatenings by a Proclamation on behalf of the War Cabinet "that all men who wilfully absent themselves from work on or after Monday, July 29th, will be deemed to have voluntarily placed themselves outside the area of the munitions industries. Their Protection Certificates will cease to have any effect from that day, and they will become liable to the provisions of the Military Service Acts."

This inflammatory action caused instant spread of the strike, which was settled by the withdrawal of the notice by agreement on the following Tuesday.

One of the most interesting episodes just prior to the collapse of the entire military machine was the gathering of the "Lansdowne Committee," a numerous and powerful circle of sincere men of all parties who were losing confidence in the Allied War Council. It arose out of Lord Lansdowne's trenchant letter of criticism. Even then, however, changes were taking place in Germany, and delight swept the world when Prince Max accepted the principles laid down by President Wilson, which acceptance

was feelingly described as "a great effort of a proud people accustomed to victory." They had been proud, arrogant and terrible, and had subjected the world to its greatest ordeal. They who lived by the sword lay in contrition and defeat at last, and the news of it thrilled the world. On November 11th of 1918, at 11 a.m., the Fourth and last Armistice was signed, that with Germany, and a great shout of joy from all countries rose to Heaven.

SECTION FOUR

THE FOUNDATIONS OF PEACE

CHAPTER XXII

Peace Celebrations—The Kaiser's Departure—The Thrones of Militarism—A Plea for Peace—Politics of the Rifle—Useful Acts of Parliament—The General Election.

WHEN the "Cease Fire" sounded along all battle fronts at 11 a.m. on November 11th, a great dead weight of morbid possibility and of prolonged gloom passed instantly from the heart and brain of civilization. "Cease Fire" vibrated throughout the universe, and thrilled all the peoples of the world with joy. The strangle hold of war had gripped every nation, and was steadily crushing the life out of them. People of every colour and clime, neutral and belligerent alike, had been paying heavily on the colossal bill of a war they did not make. Small wonder, then, that while soldiers embraced at the front, and felt overwhelmed by the peace which meant no more going over the top, and no further dives into shelter from giant explosives, while sailors on the sea danced the hornpipe, all work ceased in England, in France, in America, in Germany, in all Europe, and in many parts of every continent. That was the supreme moment of life to parents whose son was still spared, for the awful anxiety had gone, but the great joy of it was toned and subdued for seven hundred thousand British homes to which a lost lad could ne'er return. The mad fever of war was over, and it had yielded place to peace: still only a kind of peace, but gracious and sweet in comparison to the world

of yesterday. The return of peace was glorious, but not all the bitter repentance and sorrow for the mad crimes of past years could restore one boy from his silent grave. What though the Armistice terms commanded 5,000 guns, 30,000 machine guns, 3,000 mine throwers, 2,000 aeroplanes, 5,000 locomotives, 150,000 wagons, 5,000 motor lorries, and a whole fleet of battleships to boot: what were all these to compare with millions of young lives lost in that perverted time? For every one of each of these a score of men had died, and they were not worth having at the bitter price. These were only a little disarmament of the beaten foe. Not these, nor the Saare Valley, nor Alsace-Lorraine, nor Posen, nor Poland, nor all the German Colonies, nor five thousand millions in indemnity, represented peace, nor represented the picture which all the weavers had been weaving in scarlet, black, white, purple and all the colours of deep pathos. Out of such a war, such an awful climax of the ages, must come something greater and richer than Versailles offered in May of 1919. This cannot be accepted by the world as the final Peace Treaty. Truly the mood for vengeance surged strongly in many human breasts, inevitably, and the Peace Conference bowed to the temporary sway. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord, and the representatives of all the Christian nations proved they didn't believe it. They took it into their own hands and presented their completed document on May 6th. The German Foreign Minister spoke bitterly upon it on the following day, but on Sunday, June 22nd, the German National Assembly very properly bowed the knee, and decided in favour of signing the Treaty, which they did on June 29th at Versailles. The war was over, but not in effect. There were peace celebrations, great marches and firework displays in every corner of England

on Saturday, July 19th, but surely never was there such a costly firework display in the world's history, for every spark that flew upward represented a life flickered out by fire in those ghastly years. And it was right for the people to rejoice and be glad ; the only pity was they hadn't more to rejoice about. The painful fact was that six valuable months were wasted over these considerations of conquest while all Europe was sliding into famine and bankruptcy, assisted by constant revolutions and counter revolutions, until the cumulative force of these dire events had obliterated peace before peace was celebrated, and had grievously compromised the fair ideal of a League of Nations.

To return, however, to the Armistice, which was really tremendously celebrated as a delightful and long hoped for event, it involved the abdication of the Kaiser, the greatest surviving representative of the discredited form of absolute monarchy. He had played many parts, as preacher, musical composer, artist and warrior, and expected to be treated very seriously in all of them. He was extolled as All Highest in full seriousness, and it was believed that the vast system around his throne had its sure base in every village and street of the Empire. It was buttressed by stern discipline and regmentation of every phase of life, even of school life, and the Hohenzollern influence was regarded as all powerful. When this dynasty fell, and the All Highest became a fugitive from the ashes of the fire he helped to kindle, only quite a small circle of royalists minded. He followed the long line of Napoleons, Romanoffs, Hapsburgs, Hamids, and the rest who had asserted superhuman power, and in falling to the level of ordinary humanity, he was looked upon without pity. The cycle of time had levelled one who would have been a proud and arrogant conqueror, and his history ends not in world conquest but in oblivion and

discredit. There it is better to leave him in silent contemplation, the great example of one who worshipped idols, and found his faith was vain. His vast armies were scattered, his fleet under arrest, his great nation were supplicants for bread, and all his glory was revealed as tinsel show. Five weeks earlier King Ferdinand of Bulgaria had abdicated, and October of 1918 will ever be memorable for the roar of tottering crowns and thrones, built on the shifting sands of militarism. Turkey had sued for peace and the Austrian Empire had been riven asunder. Bavaria deserted Prussia and became a Republic, and even German cities were becoming Republics to themselves. Militants like Hindenburg and Ludendorff were asking for peace, and the people thought with yearning of life wasted for baubles. It was a time throbbing with great events, and every faculty was exercised to comprehend the inner portent of it all.

In our knowledge of the world's history there have been certain periods fixed for special study, and a new period was added in 1918. The greatness of this war and its tremendous results opened a new era in the history of the world, for it transcended anything in the historic period, and placed at a discount much detail of the pre-war history of nations. The new era has yet to be fashioned, and the Peace Treaty did not help in the fashioning. It was too like the war ideas, and took for granted in far too great a measure the next war, and the methods of altering its results. But the outstanding lesson of the war to all humanity was, I think, that militarism is something worse than a bauble : it is the narcotic of civilization, luring into visions of greatness, and eventually destroying its victim. Its punishment is in exact proportion to its use, and the German Empire as we knew it has tottered to take its place in a long line

of fallen Empires. Gibbon, in many volumes and many years of infinite labour, told the story of the fall of the Roman Empire, but in a sentence that great Empire fell by the lure of militarism, and all the egotism and luxury which accompany the spirit of conquest. Its unconquered legions went home to find the heart of the Empire eaten out by victories. Greece, in its great days, staked all on the will to power, and crumbled while it slew ; Spain accepted the same seduction and was lured on to disaster ; Korea sank to nothingness among the nations on its record of victories ; and ever the story is the same the world over : the way of war is the way of race destruction. Human nature being what it is, so infinite, so richly endowed with god-like attributes, wars must cease upon earth. Man has learned to ride the heavens, to reach the poles, to speak across the world, to span the ocean, and to tunnel the mountains for his convenient travel. Infinite possibilities are his, but surely, surely, this is the greatest of them, to abolish the spirit of war and to establish peace upon earth.

Might is not right, and victory does but seldom mean justice. War is only one phase of militarism ; it is the intoxicating mirage as the climax to the narcotic, but sobriety and anguish come with the crash of arms. Militarism is a spirit, like peace is a spirit, and if there is a peace of God which passeth beyond all expression, it lies with the spirit of peace, which can be implanted in the hearts of men in this twentieth century. As a journalist, I know much of the power of suggestion, which worries every conscientious editor. One murder, told with a thrill, will inspire a dozen, and one bank raid, related as a sensation, will incite fifty others. What, then, is the incalculable effect of the continual adulation of militarism ? It is specious and iniquitous to preach that

a nation is only great in time of war, or that a nation's first duty is to prepare for war. It is not true that militarism is the secret of a physically fit race. The very opposite is true : that it saps the race and weakens the next generation. The stupid Russians made a painful discovery of that truth when, full of confidence, they met the Japanese at Mukden. Japan had enjoyed two hundred years of continuous peace, and was not versed in the arts of war, but when an overbearing militarist power insulted Japan it had to bite the dust. These peaceful, garden-loving Japanese were not decadent, but the militarists of Berlin, Paris and London had agreed that they were. The result disproved all their theories, and Japan will only lose its happiness by reliance upon force. In the recent Great War it was the men from factories, farms and mines who defeated the trained conscripts of Germany. Then those who were spared gladly returned to farm and factory, and only lived again the horror of battle in their dreams. They left a great silent host of potential Hampdens, Cromwells and Tennysons beneath the soil, and the majority of English people will never see where they lie. Their souls cry out against militarism, the bane of the ages. Beneath the waves of every ocean brave sailors lie, the victims of militarism ;

> We have strewn our best to the wave's unrest
> To the shark and the sheering gull ;
> If blood be the price of Admiralty,
> Lord God, we have paid it in full.

The whole world is organized on a war footing, and every cathedral and church is redolent of the brave dead who died in the war. Just as the invention of machinery and easy transport have solved the world's production problem, and made it easy to yield enough for all, so must the next stage be the elimination of the primeval instinct

to fight for food or territory. The nineteenth century brought us out of that shallow excuse, and the twentieth century must discard its operation. When the churches forget their theological interpretations, and turn instead to the great social interpretation, of the gospel of Jesus Christ, militarism will be going the way of the plagues of the past. The politics of the rifle are sordid, and drill sergeants are not nice instructors for youth. During this war they were teaching boys of 18 the love of the bayonet, "To so love it," said one, "that without a thought you could stick it into your sister or your father!" Just a little higher up the scale in the same centre aspiring officers were being taught all the arts of spying, eavesdropping, of betrayal, deception and the obliteration of the deluded enemy. Do you think our national life will not suffer for this training? Indeed, it must.

And here I would make my appeal to England. This country was the hated of Germany, and bore the brunt of her furious onslaughts through all those years. The collapse of the enemy leaves a little danger that in our victory we cleave to the glories of militarism, and forget it was that lure which brought the enemy to exhaustion, and would lure us and the British Empire along the same fatal path, to reach the pinnacle of world might, and find stretching below a yawning precipice. The rule of the sword is misrule, but the rule of justice and mercy is invulnerable. There are scattered little outposts of Empire where an isolated judge or magistrate is revered and trusted because he is just, and there are great garrison centres where unrest is always serious because of reliance upon force. Germany can look round to-day upon Europe laid waste, upon the ruined châteaux of Hungary, upon the devastation of Serbia, Poland, and Belgium, wrecked by the thunder of war; upon the privation of Finland

and Denmark; upon the sorrow of Macedonia, upon the untold slaughter of innocents, upon famine and pestilence, the companions of war; and can realize that she might have saved it all. The mind reels at the thought of what Europe might have been, so full of promise it seemed, had not militarism mocked high hope, and fouled the entire prospect. Will Germany now choose to rely upon might or right? Will Germany pursue war or peaceful trade? Will it choose great regiments, or great races? Surely the path of honour and redemption is clear, and Germany has much to atone. By choosing paths of peace Germany can re-establish her greatness, and can so discover wrong as to cause a vengeful enemy to forget indemnities in a greater reward, to abandon *revanche* for regard. Will France, with a million sons lost in war, with its northern provinces in ruins, see any virtue in militarism, and cleave to the Saare Valley and to indemnity as the reward for her grievous loss? There is a greater, and by taking the better part, frontiers will melt away, fortresses go unwatched, and an awakened German people will strive to atone for the wrongs of the past.

That dissertation arose spontaneously out of the remembrance of our part in Europe. Bobby Burns, you remember, craved to do something for Scotia, if it were only to sing a song. I have ever felt the same desire for England, and if I could but express the great impulse towards peace which is inspiring the mind of England to-day, I should have kindled a response which would be all-powerful.

But our pageant passes along, and scarcely had the exuberant cheers for the Armistice subsided, than the dissolution of Parliament was announced, and a general election was launched, the first for eight years. The Liberal and Conservative parties, already welded in part by the Coalition Cabinet which had conducted the war

period, had for four months been discussing a further coalition of forces to cover the reconstruction period. It was therefore in the name of unity that they appealed to the people. The appeal was backed by the success of the war, and by certain useful measures passed into law during the war period. These included the Rent Restrictions Act, which during the acute house shortage prevented landlords from raising rents above the pre-war standard, except for rate increases or for extraordinary repairs. This was a most beneficent Act, safeguarding soldiers' wives and pensioners and the working classes generally against one form of exploitation. It was probably hard in its effects upon small landlords, who saw the cost of living rise to double the pre-war level, while their income was stable.

A very important Education Act had become law in August, four months before the election, stopping all exemptions from school for children between the ages of 5 and 14, with option to local authorities to increase the age to 15. It provided for compulsory day continuation schools for all young persons not being otherwise educated, up to the age of 16, and after seven years hence, up to 18 years. It forbade the employment of children under 12 years, and restricted the hours of employment of children between 12 and 14. It allowed local authorities to provide holiday and school camps, physical training centres, baths, open-air schools, and other social amenities. Medical inspection and treatment were developed, nursery and special schools were specified, and in its general provisions for administration it marked the greatest advance since the Forster measure of 1871. The Fisher Act, as it was known, was a great perquisite, but it did not establish that much talked of broad highway, cleared of scholarship obstacles, for the full education of a nation.

There was the very important Reform Act, termed the Representation of the People Act, which increased the electorate from 8,357,000 to about sixteen millions. It gave Parliamentary votes to women over 30 years of age, of whom there were six millions. The service vote for soldiers and sailors applied to youths of 19, and those abroad were able to vote in the estaminets and to send home the ballot paper by post. It redistributed the constituencies on a more equitable basis, and thereby increased the members of Parliament from 670 to 707. All elections were arranged for one day, a valuable departure from the prolonged ordeal of elections mentioned in earlier chapters. It contained one provision small and mean, for it disfranchised for five years those conscientious objectors who had refused all work of national importance. Attempts indeed were made in several centres to apply this disqualification to members of the Friends Ambulance Corps, which had rendered infinitely important service abroad.

There was the prospect of the Covenant of the League of Nations, with its international labour regulations, and there were also " the million houses of the great peace," and above all, was there not Mr. Lloyd George, orating about land for soldiers who wanted it, and of England as a land fit for heroes to live in ? He was at the zenith of his life, Prime Minister of England, and almost the only minister in Europe to have continued in office during the war. And I saw him during this campaign, snapping his fingers at the Labour party as Bolsheviks and conspirators, while great audiences admitted only by ticket cheered, and detectives occupied the extremes of the platform, while peers danced attendance upon him. Watching his deliberate self-assertion in this campaign, I remembered how often I had been with him in far different scenes.

What more natural, then, than that in the election many women gave their first vote to the Ministry which had given them the vote; that soldiers voted for that promised land; that thousands of trade unionists voted for Unity rather than Bolshevism, and the houseless voted for the million houses of the great peace? When the count took place on Saturday, December 28th, the run of figures at the tables was astonishing. Occasionally one came across a new note struck, as, for example, a soldier's paper, with "No vote, a protest" written across it, because the troops had been left largely in ignorance of the issues and the candidates. But in the main it was Coalition, and principally Conservative Coalition, and the membership of the new Parliament came out like this: Coalition Unionists, 359; Coalition Liberals, 133; Coalition National Democrats, 10; Labour, 63; Independent Unionists, 23; Independent Liberals, 28; Sinn Fein, 73; Nationalists, 7; and the Discharged Soldiers, the Co-operative movement and the Socialist, one each. In the whole of Great Britain, 5,226,395 people voted for the Coalition; 2,301,730 voted for Labour; 1,291,518 voted Liberal, and 776,012 voted for independent candidates. The 73 Sinn Fein members treated the Parliament with contempt, and never took their seats. A most striking feature of the election was the list of well-known members who were defeated. These included Mr. Asquith, Sir John Simon, Mr. Walter Runciman, Mr Herbert Samuel, Mr. Reginald McKenna, Sir Leo Chiozza Money, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and Mr. Fred Jowett. England lost for a period a very valuable element in Parliamentary life, and it returned to power in some strength a type which is not so valuable in public life.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Post-War Period—Famine and Indemnities—The Belgians' Farewell—An Industrial Crisis—The Coal Commission—The Peace Terms—The League of Nations—International Labour—Leaping the Atlantic—Reconstruction—Land of Hope and Glory—The Author's Appeal—The Events of 1920.

THE two years following the Armistice saw a gradual return to some measure of peace conditions. It was possible instantly to abandon dark curtains and to allow lights to penetrate the gloom beyond the windows; taxi-cabs were available again after an almost total disappearance; the amateur photographer no longer needed a police permit to pursue his hobby; chocolates and confectionery reappeared, the candle was gladly discarded, and the postal service restored a little measure of its pre-war efficiency. The railway service was slightly improved, but the old frequency of trains and the old speed of expresses did not promptly return. The demobilization of men, slow at first, was expedited until 25,000 men were being released daily from the British camps and 27,000 daily being transferred from camps overseas to this country. As the vast armies melted away there were many joyful family re-unions, and men were glad to return to soft raiment after years of uniform and stern discipline. There was serious trouble in the army before the pace was accelerated and large forces of restless troops demonstrated in London. The same spirit was manifest in the American Army, which was anxious to set foot again in the United

States, and which spent a long interval between the farewell march through London and the embarkation for home. The demobilization of women workers was proceeding simultaneously. The closing days of great munition factories meant much to young women who for four years past had earned better wages than they ever knew before. A great " general post " of labour set in, and it is not surprising that in a re-assortment which affected millions unsettlement and discontent arose. An unemployment donation scheme was launched, under which all unemployed workers could claim a weekly dole of from 12s. 6d. to 29s., according to age and standing. For some months there were long weekly queues at the various pay centres, but a process of disqualification and reduction was gradually applied until the allowance was only available for discharged soldiers, thousands of whom were seeking work in 1920. The discontinuance was especially hard on men who were 65 when war broke out and were good for some years of service. They had worked hard and earned good wages during the war, but at the end of the rush discovered they were seventy and unemployed and unwanted. The close of the donation left many such facing a blank which only the old age pension or the workhouse could inadequately fill.

Another marked change during 1919 was the departure of 250,000 Belgian refugees for their devastated homeland. Their womenfolk had arrived on these shores in sabots and shawls, with their worldly possessions in a bundle. They returned well shod, well clad, with a good sprinkling of them in warm fur coats. Their children had been taught in special schools staffed by Belgians, and the men had found lucrative employment in British industries. Their presence had made us familiar with the sound of Flemish in the streets, with Belgian daily newspapers, and, let it be truthfully added, with the horse-meat shop.

On the whole they had been happy and prosperous in England, and many of them left with regret. At their departure these large communities left expresssions of thanks with many towns and cities in the form of silver plate, of monuments, and of trees planted in commemoration. There were also smaller communities of Serbian refugees, youths who were rescued from the merciless Austrian advance, who suffered hardship in the mountains, and who were brought here for care and education. Very delightful company they were, too.

These were amongst the minor features of the great transfer from war to peace, and there were others of a more pronounced and vital character, some of them not at all satisfactory. De-control of food was started but had to be re-imposed at once owing to the unlimited tendency to exploit. Prices continued to rise to a feverish height during 1919 and 1920, and no Food Ministry could hold control. It could only organize buying and control consumption, and had to recognize a world shortage of commodities due to the five lost years, devoted to production for war. This uncontrollable rise on the cost of living touched not only food but everything, until the "John Bradbury" was worth only 8s. 6d. in comparison to the pre-war sovereign. The year 1914, "a far off glory seemed" unattainable again until many years had passed or until systems of profiteering had changed. The tendency to excessive prices was accompanied by a steady decline in the earnings of the working people, and the general spirit of unrest caused forebodings of the gloomiest type. "How long will it be?" men asked, and they meant the revolution. Throughout the whole war period profit had been secure. The terms of the Loans set the Government guarantee upon it, and Lord Devonport extended it generously to traders. While margins of 25 per cent. and

33⅓ per cent. on transactions were recognized as legitimate, and colossal fortunes were made, the Government set up Profiteering Tribunals in 1919 to worry corner shopkeepers and to order the return of 1½d. on a tea-cake. A committee of a dozen would sit for hours with such a decision as their only fruit. Gross inflations of values was the order in almost every line, until the discharged soldier found his first suit of "civvies" cost him twelve guineas, his modest furniture £100, and his house, not yet erected, rose in cost from £250 to £1,000 ere it was touched. The greatest illustration of all time was being produced, that war makes the rich richer still, and the poor, poorer still. It was being dimly realized now that those who raged against German dumping had a method in their raging. It was realized now that after all the strenuous efforts and sacrifice, there could be no holiday at Germany's expense, and that an indemnity meant delusion, for in the long run it was merely excessive dumping. Young "temporary gentlemen" had to return to the clerk's stool, and even a lieutenant-colonel became a policeman. The great lesson was sinking home that one nation cannot make another its slaves with profit. Many popular delusions about war were killed in 1919, when we had two strange cries proceeding side by side. At Versailles five months were spent in fashioning a Peace Treaty and the people of this country were satiated with promises of "indemnity" and calculations of the wealth of Germany. And at the same time the cry of famine was ringing from every European capital, and agonizing stories were coming through as to the effects of pestilence. England, most fortunate of the belligerents in Europe, was suffering from want and high prices. President Wilson, finely holding the balance, was reminding the world that only a common devotion to right can bind men together.

It is impossible to build and maintain sound international relations until national relations are right, and it is hopeless to expect a League of Nations to secure justice, peace and accord, if its constituent parts represent strife at home, and tolerate national conditions that flout every sense of justice. One might just as well expect a brutal husband and intolerant father to be a sweetening influence in public life. Sham and imposition are calmly dispelled by time, and while a League of Nations was being propounded, there was something wrong in England. "Nationalization" was the key-word in matters political, and there arose a powerful controversy over this principle. The Miners' Peace Charter demanded it for the mines, and an industrial conflict of great magnitude was only averted by the mutual acceptance of the Coal Mines Commission, to investigate the possibility of these demands, which included the nationalization of all mines and minerals, and a 30 per cent. advance on earnings. The Commission, over which Mr. Justice Sankey presided, had extraordinary powers and wide scope, and it conducted an inquisition without precedent into the industry and the profits derived therefrom. The miners' strike notices were dated to expire on March 15th, and the Prime Minister promised that the Commission should present an interim report on March 31st, if they would hold up action for a fortnight. The evidence was heard in public, and was of a sensational character. The first witness was the Financial Adviser to the Coal Controller, and from that day, March 4th, until March 17th, when the last witness was heard, and, indeed, until the final report was presented, public interest was deeply rooted in the disclosures. Profound impressions were made by the revelations of ducal royalties, and as a painful contrast, by the conditions of life in mining villages. The first week of evidence severely shook the

grounds of private ownership, which was most gravely indicted on grounds of wastefulness, inefficiency and profiteering, and the methods of distribution proved as vulnerable as the system of coal drawing. These general public impressions were supported by a wealth of detail in evidence which was not refuted by witnesses for the existing system. By agreed arrangement, official witnesses were heard first, then representatives of affected industries, next the parties interested in coal ownership, and finally the miners' witnesses, who sought a change in the system. How strange it seemed that this dramatic story should be revealed in the King's robing-room. Sir John Sankey made a most admirable chairman, but the composition of the Commission was too conflicting to yield unanimity in the Interim Report, and on March 20th, the appointed day, three separate Reports were presented, as follow :—

(1) The Majority Report, signed by Messrs. R. Smillie, Frank Hodges and Herbert Smith, Sir Leo Chiozza Money, Messrs. R. H. Tawney and Sidney Webb, conceding the miners' claims as not excessive, both as to wages and the six hour day. It declared that in the interest of the consumers, as much as in that of the miners, nationalization ought to be at once determined on.

(2) The Sankey Report, signed by the Honourable Mr. Justice Sankey (Chairman), Mr. Arthur Balfour, Sir Arthur Duckham and Sir Thomas Royden, Bart. This recommended a seven hour day from July 16, 1919, and subject to the economic position, a six hour day from July 13, 1921 ; an advance in wages of 2s. per day, with 1s. for those under 16 ; the continuation of the Coal Mines Control Agreement ; and it proceeded "Even upon the evidence already given, the present system of ownership and working in the coal industry stands condemned, and

some other system must be substituted for it, either nationalization or a method of unification by national purchases or by joint control. It is in the interests of the country that the colliery worker shall in the future have an effective voice in the direction of the mine." It described houses in some districts as a reproach to our civilization, and suggested that a penny a ton might be collected on coal raised to improve housing and amenities in colliery districts. The penny a ton represented one million per annum.

(3) The Coalowners' Report, signed by Messrs. R. W. Cooper, J. T. Forgie, and Evan Williams, which advised an advance of 1s. 6d. per day, with 9d. for persons under 16, a seven hour day below ground, and eight hour day for surface workers.

When the Reports were presented to the Government, Mr. Bonar Law, leader of the House, announced that the Government had adopted the Sankey Report "in spirit and in letter," but added that if a strike took place the Government would use all the resources of the State without hesitating.

This Commission, with its searching evidence and its very important findings, takes rank as one of the most important achievements of organized labour. The miners withdrew their strike notices, and the Commission resumed its incomplete task. The second stage was even more important than the first, for it was investigating general principles of control upon a prospect already imminent of full agreement as to the future of this great key industry. The Government had accepted as we have seen, and on April 16th, the miners balloted as follows :—

For acceptance of Sankey Report ..	693,084
Against	76,992
Majority for	616,092

The second stage began on Wednesday, April 23rd, and during the 28 days on which evidence was heard 116 witnesses were examined. They included expert economists, royalty owners, Home Office witnesses, coal-owners, miners and miners' wives. Two members of the Commission—Mr. Webb and Sir Leo Money—also gave evidence. This time four Reports were presented: (1) by the Chairman; (2) by Mr. Frank Hodges, Sir Leo Money, Messrs. R. Smillie, H. Smith, R. H. Tawney and Sidney Webb; (3) by Messrs. Balfour, Cooper, Sir Adam Nimmo, Sir Allan M. Smith (two changes in personnel since the first inquiry), and Mr. Evan Williams; (4) by Sir Arthur Duckham. All four Reports agreed upon recommending the State ownership of all seams of coal, "once and for all in one final settlement, together with all easements and rights," reported the chairman. All the Reports also agreed to recommend that the machinery of local authorities and of the co-operative movement should be utilized for the purpose of distribution. There followed many points of difference in the Reports. Messrs. Hodges, Smillie and Smith did not agree to any compensation whatever being paid for mineral rights, except as compassionate allowances. The Chairman recommended the principle of State ownership of the coal mines, with a system of local administration, and legislation to acquire the mines after coal control had been continued for three years, with fair and just compensation to the owners. In Clause 31 he said "Half a century of education has produced in the workers in the coalfields far more than a desire for the material advantages of higher wages and shorter hours. They have now in many cases and to an ever increasing extent, a higher ambition of taking their due share and interest in the direction of the industry to the success of which they too are contributing." The

six Labour members substantially agreed with the Chairman, and emphasized certain points. The coal-owners reported that "nationalization in any form would be detrimental to the development of the industry and to the economic life of the country." Sir Arthur Duckham was against nationalization, but advocated as an alternative a scheme of district unification, private ownership being superseded by publicly controlled corporations, with guaranteed minimum rates of interest. Of the profits above a certain maximum, he recommended that two-thirds should be applied to reduce the price of coal.

Twelve months later one heard very little indeed of the Coal Commission. While it lasted its impress was deep, but daily impressions are varied, and soon exhaust each other. Thus the public memory of a great inquisition is not long. No sooner were the news pages of the daily Press devoted to other subjects than a wholesale and systematic advertising campaign against nationalization began, and it was maintained well into 1920. Pet arguments and phrases were re-served so effectively that nationalization became distinctly unpopular. I conceive it to be right in principle, and expedient in regard to great staple industries like mining, shipping, railways and most of all the land. Given these broad lines under State ownership there would be more room than ever for private enterprise, which has never had full encouragement, and there would be a better reward for services rendered. The Sankey Commission was a milestone on the path of progress.

It is told of Sir William Harcourt that in a conversation over lunch he said, "It used to be slaughter for the glory of the thing, but they have given that up now; now it is slaughter for trade." The long and sordid history of battles confirms that view. India has been subject to exploitation during long centuries by several European

nations, and only now, in the twentieth century, is that vast country steadily emerging to the status and dignity of a nation, its tragic path being marked by such cruelties as the Amritsar massacre. Most of Africa has been parcelled out and shared as spoils of conquest, and soldiers of every great state have realized that even dusky natives love their native land, and will fight for it. The history of reliance upon bloodshed either for glory, or oriental splendour, or trade, is so long and frightful as to make the mind reel. Economic imperialism has been succeeded by a disregard of humanity, and many a race of dark or brown men has been dubbed as "savage" only because it did not kneel to the merciless and savage greed of white invaders. Erasmus, in his exquisite *Complaint of Peace* written four centuries ago, showed how man was the only living creature which resorted to deliberate and organized self destruction, but for greed of gold the conquest went on. Seventy years ago William Howitt wrote a history of Colonization, which revealed some of the mountain of guilt lying upon European nations, but the pursuit never flagged. The civilized states were out to exploit the world's supply of raw materials, and to secure the lucrative market for finished goods. They all went the way of conquest, the use of organized violence, the subjugation of a race, the raising of a flag, and then trading for profit with a terrified population. Yet, finally, the end never justified the means. There were differences between nations in their methods of colonization and in this last phase of imperialism, that of imposing conditions upon the conquered and dispossessed, Great Britain had the best reputation. Take up the history of battles again, the stories of daring in past centuries, and search for the motive behind all of them, and they make the heart sick. Nations cherished a gross conception of wrong methods to reach right

purposes, and Europe made the world its hunting ground, with men as marks for arrows, spears, swords, and bullets. Then the conquerors became jealous amongst themselves, and envy led to plots. Germany wanted more raw materials, and more outlets for trade and settlers, and set envious eyes upon French and British colonies. It was right for Germany to express her wants; very wrong to resort to war to get them, but for centuries war and colonies had been associated, and they seemed inseparable still.

So we had the catastrophe of 1914, so prolonged that twenty-three "little" wars still waged in 1919, and in 1920 French black troops fired on German citizens in Frankfort, and made the Ruhr Valley hideous with rape and disorder. This imposition of black troops may have suited the French desire to heap contumely upon Germany, but whom, think you, will pay most bitterly for this folly? Not Germany, I trow. Thus, after the Great War the malevolent spirit of war remained, and machine guns, tanks and armoured cars were familiar in many cities of Europe. Nor will the spirit of war be eradicated by talking of the horrors of war. You cannot trim the talons of an eagle and call it a dove, for it remains an eagle, anxious for the talons to develop again after the painful operation. The public conscience is very muddy on this question, and the public mind soon forgets the ghastliness even of this great war. Remobilization would only disgust the young men of England: it would not startle them, because they know the spirit remains. Happily, however, the new spirit was planted in the twentieth century, and it is a fruitful seed, being nurtured by many loving hands. It will grow and the gardeners of this fair flower of civilization will continue to pluck out the choking weeds, until the garden of life blooms with a new beauty, the beauty

and plenty of peace on earth and goodwill amongst men. Tennyson foresaw

> The Parliament of man,
> The Federation of the world;

and Burns sang of the day when

> Man to man the warld o'er
> Shall brothers be for a' that.

Were these hopes vain? A thousand times, no. You who become despondent in the strife—and you don't if you are really in the strife—pause for a moment to think how quickly after all we are emerging from the mist of ages. The spread eagle with extended talons was for long ages the sinister emblem of Europe—of Russia, Austria and Germany, and it is gone, and its royal devotees are in the dust. Democracy is arising, with the spirit of a new day. Shall England and France then stand conspicuous as the world's militant nations, clinging yet to the arbitrament of force? I do not believe it.

These thoughts were stirred when actually I had settled down to write of The Covenant—the greatest international event in history—the Covenant of the League of Nations, brought into being on January 25th, 1919, with the blessing of twenty-five nations represented at the Peace Conference. It was an elementary and shy Covenant, not going very far in its first flight, but the idea was there, just as it was with an aeroplane which remained above the ground for eleven seconds in 1903. A shy little flight, truly, but given the wings for flight, and a propelling force growing ever stronger, the flights of this bird of peace will ere long belt the world. The basic decisions of the

Conference which led to the framing of the Covenant were these :—

(*a*) It is essential for the peace of the world that a League of Nations be established.

(*b*) This League shall be open to every civilized nation which can be relied upon to promote its objects and shall be an integral part of the Treaty of Peace.

(*c*) The members shall periodically meet in International Conference and have a permanent organization and secretary.

Erasmus would have wept with joy to see this dream of the prophets coming to life. A sound League of Nations should carry into international affairs the spirit of co-operation which actuates personal, family and civic life. One of its features was an International Labour Commission, and this was possibly the greatest tangible achievment. The first Conference was later held at Washington to discuss and adopt a series of resolutions designed to deal with

"The regulation of the hours of work, including the maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own ; recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organization of technical and vocational education, and other measures."

This effort to raise the status of labour must be applied the world over, to black as well as to white, until all workers everywhere are assured of that abundant standard

of life which may be defined as nature's minimum wage. It must be applied by all the dominant Powers to all their citizens, not simply to those at home, but to those who people and constitute their dependencies overseas, until the spirit of the Legaue of Nations enfolds every village or krall, in arctic or torrid zones. The present daily life of nine-tenths of the people who inhabit the globe is far from satisfactory, and for a large proportion of them it is sordid. Humanity is entitled to infinitely better things, and they are obtainable for the asking and the giving. It was a trite saying of President Wilson's, worthy of world-wide application, that "Food and not force will stop Bolshevism." Nature is infinitely generous, and yields food for all her children. We need now just that measure of organization which will deliver to all nature's children their full needs, and if vested interests are in the way of this, they must be brushed aside in the name of humanity. The International Labour Office is that grain of seed which can spread in passing years until the only solidarity of Labour is the solidarity of happiness, and old ideas of warfare, suppression and exploitation for 10 per cent. are relegated to a dictionary of forgotten terms.

It must be said at once that the Peace Treaty announced to the world on May 8th of 1919 was a crushing blow at the League of Nations, dealt by the same hands as had fashioned the League. "Grace before Meat" it was satirically called, and certainly there were eager appetites at the feast. Here was no League, but an alliance of Powers which had been successful this time in holding down an alliance of Powers which had lost this time. A military alliance is the very antithesis of a League of Nations; instead of being a buttress it is a menace to the peace of the world, and there is far too much of both military alliance and military tradition in this Peace. They who created

the League had promptly deluged it with an avalanche of trouble, and have left to voluntary organizations and to devoted individuals, instead of to the nations, the supreme task of upraising the new tradition. There is a vindictive school of thought, and there was once a " ginger " telegram for some hundreds of inexperienced members of Parliament. They need not have been so anxious. The Peace carried its penalties for undoubted guilt, and its blunders are not beyond repair. It has left us a world to redeem, but it also invited the redemption. Practically all the clauses were settled by the " Big Five " and there were no minutes of their deliberations. The draft was presented to the German delegates on May 7th, and their Foreign Minister, Count Brockdorff Rantzau, remained seated as he delivered that sorrowful and embittered speech to the great gathering of selected persons on that historic occasion. Alsace-Lorraine, and the rich iron-ore beds which only the Germans had developed, reverted to France ; Posen and West Prussia went to Poland, and several border states received self-determination. The coal of the Saare Valley went to France. Danzic was made a free port, and the whole colonial empire of Germany was taken from her. Austria, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia became independent. The sharp military and naval terms included the surrender of an imposing fleet of warships, large numbers of aeroplanes and other possessions, and the occupation of territory west of the Rhine by Allied troops for fifteen years. The mighty German army was dismissed and the General Staff dissolved. Conscription and armament making were alike forbidden, and William was to be arraigned " for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties." Responsibility was imposed upon Germany for all the loss and damage caused to the Allies by war, and a payment of one thousand millions on account was

required by the summer of 1921, in gold, goods or ships. A Reparation Commission was set up to ascertain the amount and Germany was to meet that amount in thirty years. There were extensive claims for cattle, horses and machines, running into hundreds of thousands. Never did a romantic child weave such a fairy tale of future riches as the Allies knit together at Versailles. Soon the first disillusion came, when absolute penury was discovered, and almost as soon came the second, when that majestic array of warships at Scapa Flow was sent down to Davy Jones' locker. Probably it was a symbolic act, symbolic of the sinking of war traditions, hopes and greeds dispelled and lost. The spirit of disgust which sank the German Fleet will yet vanquish the entire military machine, and rid the nations of their greatest encumbrance. We can fitly leave the Kaiser "to heaven, and to those thorns that in his bosom lodge," and eternal justice will not arraign the Kaiser alone for the guilt of war.

A whole library of volumes has been written on the subject of the war and the peace, and my time has come to leave this subject. It seemed to me necessary, for future readers of this Pageant, to thus summarize these great events. There now remains the duty of recording just a few of the many events of this post war period. Reconstruction was writ large over every sphere, and the entire social theory was under the challenge of new thought, from Parliament to domestic service. There was the Reconstruction Ministry, directed by Dr. Addison, pouring out its "Little Grey Books" on every subject within its scope. The first of the series by Dr. Addison, discussed the problems of shipping, raw materials, demobilization, industrial organization and Whitley Councils. The second dealt with the urgent problem of housing, food production and the return to the land. Others of the thirty or so

discussed the re-settlement of service men, adult education, rural industries, juvenile employment, public health, town planning, coal conservation, electric development and even the classics in British education. At the same time the Ministry of Labour was discoursing of Works Committees and tracing their history down the ages; the Board of Agriculture was launching pamphlets for the guidance of new aspirants to farming; and every department or public organization was trying to contribute to the common fund of knowledge and incentive. Lord Haldane's Research Committee reported on the necessity of new Ministries, like the Ministry of Health, which has since been established under Dr. Addison, and a Ministry of Justice, which is not yet established. A complete revision and co-ordination of official duties was advised. A drastic revision of the Poor Law system was propounded, to transfer the duties of guardians to county and local authorities. A commendable scheme was submitted for a series of great electric generating stations.

Inertia had seized the country generally, however, as a reaction from war strain, and the most marked activity seemed to be that of perpetually rising prices and wages. Many munificent gifts were made to universities and educational institutions as a most excellent form of war memorial; gifts ranging from £500,000 by Sir E. Cassell to £10,000 to endow chairs of European languages. Within a few months of the Peace we had the railway-workers out on strike, and for eight days from September 26th we were deprived of a train service. Extraordinary scenes were witnessed as a result of the mobilization of thousands of motor lorries to perform essential transport by road. A passenger service of motor chars-a-banc linked up the country in an expensive and inadequate manner, and we had a temporary experience of stage coach amenities. On the first day of the strike the Prime Minister called

the men anarchists and conspirators, and on the last day he invited them into his drawing-room to make peace. The ironfounders were out for eighteen weeks from September 20th, and as the moulders hold the key to engineering, their long struggle most seriously crippled all industry. Some thousands of metropolitan policemen went on strike, followed by their colleagues at Liverpool. The Yorkshire miners came out, and Sir Eric Geddes arrived with his "circus" to take charge. Youthful troops paraded the streets of Yorkshire cities, equipped with trench helmets and machine guns. The outlook was not without its sinister aspect, but that we are a nation of stoics. There were terrible after-war crimes, due to a greatly diminished sense of the value of human life, and the fateful black cap was seen with awful frequency at Assizes.

"Wars are not paid for in war time, the bill comes later," said Benjamin Franklin, and the nation had to face the financial aftermath of war.

The national revenue paid into the Treasury during the financial year which ended in April of 1920 was £1,339,571,381, and the disbursements chargeable to revenue were £1,665,772,928. The net result, therefore, was a deficit of £326,201,547, a deficit bigger in itself than any pre-war Budget. This adverse balance was less than one-fifth that of the previous year, and the smallest since the beginning of the war. The revenue was far the greatest in the history of the nation, £1,339,571,381 as stated, and the expenditure fell by a thousand millions from the great years of the war calamity down to a figure still unreasonably high, £1,665,772,928. The last seven years of finance are the most extraordinary in the world's history, and reveal the stunning effect of war upon a nation. In 1913–14 we had a surplus of £749,928, in 1914–15

a deficit of 333¾ millions, which jumped to a deficit of £1,222,000,000 in the following year. The climax of loss was reached in 1917–18 when the deficit on the national accounts stood only a few pounds under two thousand millions. We have emerged from the war on a scale of receiving and paying which is something like eight and a half times higher than the pre-war average, and yet our useful productions are even less. The deficit alone on the last six years totalled £7,186,325,122, and the sum was raised by loans at heavy rates of interest.

The direct cost of the war to all the belligerents was computed at forty thousand millions, but its indirect costs and frightful loss of material comfort are entirely beyond human computation. At its close the debts of the European nations averaged close upon 50 per cent. of their national wealth, and the relation of taxation to income had risen to over 28 per cent. in Great Britain, 40 per cent. in France, and 45 per cent. in Russia. The United Kingdom had raised a total force of 5,704,416 for service on land, and these, supplemented by Empire contingents, gave a total British force of over 8,600,000. In addition to these were the men in the Navy and merchant service and 250,000 uniformed women for auxiliary service. Seven million young men were computed to have been killed in the war, and eighteen millions wounded. The casualties of the United Kingdom alone were stated as follows :— Killed, 549,967 ; wounded, 1,649,946 ; missing, 253,353 ; total, 2,453,266 ; percentage of white male population, 10·91. The total casualties of all British forces, excluding Indian and coloured troops, were :—Killed, 762,749 ; wounded, 2,110,650 ; missing, 275,301 ; total, 3,158,000. But these terrible figures are not one half the story of the indictment of war. France had over a million men killed ; Italy half a million ; Russia, 1,700,000 ; Germany,

1,600,000; Austria, 800,000 and Turkey, 436,000. Losses of under a hundred thousand men, "minor" losses by comparison, were sustained by the United States, Belgium, Serbia and several other belligerents.

There were losses too profound and tragic to enumerate. Militarism had erected its supreme funeral pyre, and left a world distressed.

One striking result of the war measures was the knowledge that England obtained of itself, and the information was not of a nature to administer consolation. The housing census taken in several of the large centres furnished most painful disclosures of overcrowding. In one city over eight thousand families were found crammed into less than four thousand back to back houses, and in houses of larger dimensions there were found six, eight, ten and even twelve separate families, existing somehow. Innumerable cases were discovered of discharged officers and men, recently married, occupying two scantily furnished rooms, eager for houses, anxious for furniture to come in the market at prices within their means. The return of the battalions from the Great War was taken with philosophic calm, and the gratitude of the nation for their terrible sacrifice was somewhat intangible. Thousands of them could be found at the Labour Exchanges asking for work, and to secure houses they had to affix their names to long waiting lists. Too many of the great employers who had gained enormously during the war had conspicuously failed to answer the question "Am I my brother's keeper?" When a deputation of workmen waited upon one of them for improved conditions he asked "Do you think I am in industry for 5 per cent.? I can have that for lying on the couch." Do you wonder at labour unrest when men report an utterance like that to their fellows?

One of the most sensational after-war discoveries

related to the physical condition of the men of England. It had for long been patent to the superficial observer that the male industrial population was not handsome, and a vast audience of manual workers is always a study in the descent of man. One sees halls packed with pale and sunken faces; whose rugged features indicate endurance and struggle, but certainly not comeliness. The well filled face, with a natural bloom in it, is rare and refreshing in such audiences. I have seen tens of thousands of such men in great meetings, where a sense of humour and joy in life is entirely lacking. The prevailing tone is always one of tense earnestness and anxiety, bordering near to the tragic. Suspicion of betrayal is often manifest. Frequently on a Sunday morning I have faced an audience of a thousand such, and in the dim obscurity of a picture house, the serried ranks are depicted in a dense pall of grey tobacco smoke, rising towards the ventilators. When all seats and aisles are packed, and the back rows are lost as a mere dark blurr, and these men look for a lead towards something better in life, it is impossible to avoid a militant tone towards present conditions. Sometimes in the obscurity of candle-light at such gatherings, the pale narrow faces of a thousand overworked and underfed men is such a spectacle as would shock that happier section which does not know how the mass lives. Our girls are gentle and soft, capable of development into the most precious qualities of women, until the factory system engulfs them, and the change is then most perceptible. Great audiences of women are rare, but occasionally I have seen them, and if they are all factory workers, a Diana is but rare. The "silk" of life is taken from them, and toil has stamped its impress deep upon physique and face. In middle life the British working class is light in weight but heavy with gloom. There are many who will surely think I am exaggerating when I

say that twenty millions of people in this country are but caricatures of what they might have been. I plead their cause with you. Those differences which arise from the accident of birth begin with the cradle, but widen with the years. The man of comfort, education and freedom finds life widening with the years, ever richer and more sublime, until when death touches his silver hair he finds he has but just learned how to live. Not so with the vast industrial army whose condition should give us concern by night and day. Their lives narrow down after the republic of the school is left, and become ever narrower as family responsibilities remove little diversions, and as physical resiliance rapidly passes away.

Some little insight into this condition was given by the Report of the Medical Boards on their work during conscription. In twelve months, from November, 1917, to October, 1918, they examined 2,500,000 men of military age, and of these they found 10 per cent. totally and permanently unfit for any form of military service. Only 36 per cent. were found to possess a full standard of health and strength, and in certain cities, notorious for back to back houses and wealth production, this percentage fell to 28. Physical defects were found to be common in the towns, and in the country the farm labourer, of excellent physique at 20, was found to be middle aged at 40. Pale and anæmic young men in the towns were found to be worn out at 45. Lord Kitchener had seen the destroying effects of our industrial system, and was resolved upon improvement. Shorter hours of labour, garden suburbs, and a better distribution of the products of industry point the way to an A1 population, alert in mind, splendid in outlook and superb in physique. To establish peace and to make this the first consideration of peace conditions, should now be the inspiration of England. There is more

in accomplishing this than in designing an aeroplane which can travel a hundred miles, deliver its bombs, turn round and return to its station without a pilot. That is very wonderful, but it won't help the human race on its upward way.

Reference to a weird aeroplane reminds me of the duty to mention the fact that the broad Atlantic was crossed in the air several times in 1919. In May an American seaplane, the N.C.4, made a successful and carefully organized crossing to England, with halts en route. In June Sir John Alcock, killed a few weeks later while flying in France, leapt the Atlantic in one great flight of 1,900 nautical miles, accomplished in less than sixteen hours. In July the great airship the R.34 made the double journey, flying a total of 6,000 miles, directed and advised all the way by wireless information from the Air Ministry in Whitehall. Sir John Alcock and his colleague, Lieutenant Brown, shared a newspaper prize of £10,000, but the greatest reception of all was given to H. G. Hawker, who during his great attempt fell in mid-Atlantic, and was rescued from his frail craft just in time by the steamship *Mary*. The public had become familiar with aero engines of 300 to 500 horse power, with enormous flying boats, and with motor boats that would cut through the waves more rapidly than the speed of our best express trains. Wireless telephony has developed into practical utility, and a system of telegraphy was in use which eclipsed any possibility of error by duplicating at the receiving station the actual writing of the sender in every detail. This system was used mainly for big financial transactions, whilst in ordinary telegraphy, speed and reliability had greatly increased. Wireless telegraphy was being tested from pocket installations, and in the whole gamut of scientific research and invention England presented the very antithesis of Samuel Butler's "*Erewhon*, where

simplicity and humanity prevailed, and where, as Defoe once declared of Colne Valley in simpler times, there was "no man idle, nor saw I any poor."

Can you recall Thomas Hardy's description of Tess going away from home with young Stoke in the dog-cart, when "The wind blew through Tess's white muslin to her very skin, and her washed hair flew out behind?" We can smile at such an idea of the speed of a horse now, for to-day school girls trip away on auto-scooters, and many a well indulged young man knows the joy of sixty miles an hour by motor. The trouble with England is the trouble of a bad farmer. The riches of the few well placed have been allowed to run to seed in every form of obvious luxury, but the main crop is deprived of sunshine and cannot ripen to full harvest.

We have concerned ourselves too much with scientific advancement and far too little with social advancement, but the latter is the most important. I am, therefore, far more interested in the changing social outlook of 1920 than I am in the scientific achievement obvious in 1920. There is an evident national will to take a large measure of war profits for the nation, and, indeed, to compel the wealthy to relieve the heavy burdens of the dispossessed. Instead of the revolution feared in 1919, we had Mr. Austen Chamberlain, deemed the unimaginative, breaking new ground in taxation, and thereby accomplishing something far higher than record revenue. We had the formation of Building Guilds in Lancashire, a monopoly of labour which proposed to displace the contractor and to accept full responsibility for erecting 100,000 houses if need be, in partnership with the local authorities. Committees of workmen devised a very carefully considered scheme, mathematic down to the last decimal figure, for giving public service direct, instead of hiring themselves to other

men for wages. They proffered to accept undertakings costing twenty-five to fifty millions, and to restore the joy and pride of the craft spirit, in the nation's building. The early progress of such a sweeping change from established order is slow, and clogged with misgiving, but once launched and proved successful, it will not stop at building. We shall have such guilds in other industries, and the emancipation of the people will come of its own volition almost unperceived. It is gratifying to see the rise of a new type of trade union official, who, instead of talking in terms of strike reserve funds, and of holding the community to ransom, begins to recognize that as trustee for a monopoly of labour he is also trustee for a large part of public credit. It is not by nationalization that salvation comes, but by a right spirit towards the future, and a right custody of the powers we possess. This question of the public credit, of the national debt, and the solvency of society, turn almost solely upon the production of labour. When labour realizes that, and yet deliberately disorganizes the whole vast complexity into chaos, it forgets that labour is the first and greatest victim. It should, therefore, find a strikeless method of working out its salvation, and that method is to hand. The credit system is the bed rock of what is termed capitalism, and as it turns upon labour, and the trade unions have a practical monopoly of labour, all things are possible to a well directed trade unionism. In the correct advancing of their cause, they can benefit the whole nation, whereas the constant strike is but the frittering away of the strength of the strong, and the constant bug-bear of all society. Nor are Whitley Councils a remedy, for they hopelessly seek to "yoke in all exercise of noble end," the disinherited and the rich possessor.

There are not wanting other signs that having tried every wrong way, and blundered grievously through history,

the nation is at last taking a right outlook. The Labour party has long been tilting a lance at old privileges and prejudices. Its constitution is a pattern to other parties, and its policy is the best its united membership can devise. It fails signally in a third essential, that of the calibre of its candidates. The public has some right to judge a party by the quality and inspiration of its nominees for public favour, and all too often a most unfortunate selection places not an avenue but a barrier between the electorate and the ideals. It remains profoundly true yet that there is more in the Christian than the Marxian philosophy, and idealism in tenets must be backed by some degree of excellence in personality. Many of the elected of democracy are not of the type to break old bureaucracy, nor to fashion a new heaven and new earth, nor to end the rule of the country by groups foregathered in the political clubs of London. This form of rule has turned provincial Liberalism into a laughing stock. The members were inexpressive and powerless while a faction fight took place between a Premier and an ex-Premier, and Liberalism waited to go the way of the successful. It was like a party without a soul, and without a constitution ; a party far adrift from the warmth of ten years before.

It is high time now for another " Cease Fire " to sound, the one over old abuses of power, and old interests in armaments and all elements of mischief. When I look back over the twenty years of marked progress, I have to sadly realize it has been the period of the greatest slaughter in the Christian era, and I suppose that for every one of the 1920 years of that era, ten thousand men have been slain in battle. Party plots, national plots and international plots are all associated with this morbid fact, and it is time England devoted attention to social and political advance.

During this same era countless thousands of souls have passed into eternity with their faculties and attributes entirely undeveloped, and the public service of which they were capable, entirely lost. The past excuse of ignorance has gone, for since Gray's "Elegy" was written we have been able to realize what it meant to lose the possible service of this great army of potential good.

> But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
> Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
> Chill penury repressed their noble rage
> And froze the genial current of the soul.

As I write, lingering with some affection over the last few lines of a volume about to pass from me, I notice the Bank Rate is rising to the figures of the black week of 1914: that food and other essentials are dearer still, that house rents are up, that bread is darker, and that Trade Union reports are ominous of a coming storm. Everybody is wanting somebody to do something to put things right, and nobody has the power. There will be passing storms and struggles, and I look backward to 1820, when the true effect of the Napoleon Campaign came home, darkening to 1824, amid conditions of poverty and slavery. I recall that industry had its 1832, and the beginning of emancipation. After the world's greatest war, there is certain to be serious reaction yet, with some degree of chaos, confusion and strife. I wonder if we shall face like men the possible misfortunes of 1924, and "march, breast forward, never doubting clouds will break," to the possible industrial emancipation of 1932. I earnestly appeal to every conflicting interest to put the wider interest first, and to act in all things for the general good. The stability of England is a sacred trust, for confusion here must

involve calamity amongst distressed nations dependent upon us.

> Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
> The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
> 'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand,
> Between a splendid and a happy land.

If ever a year called for all to be placed on the altar of service, it is this year 1920. Upon its events may turn the fate of a generation. As a lighthouse on some rocky shore gleams intermittently over the stormy wave, the fatal cliffs and the safe harbour alike, so may England be to the world, ever pointing to safe anchorage amid the tossing of life's storm. May this country by common consent of its people ever stand first in the line of progress, a worthy example to all nations, a land of hope and glory. A full measure of generous life such as only the minority have yet realized is possible for all, given the right social outlook. It should always be remembered that modern civilization is young, and that we are at the beginning and not at the climax of ages. The best is yet to be, and humanity will assuredly rise to finer heights than have yet been known :—

> These things shall be, a loftier race
> Than e'er the world hath known, shall rise,
> With flame of freedom in their souls
> And light of knowledge in their eyes.
>
> . . . .
>
> New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
> And mightier music thrill the skies. . . .

One great deterrent to progress is the shortness of human life. A perceptive generation has only got the grasp of

the sorry scheme of things entire, when it yields place to a new, and the study begins again. This fact places a tremendous responsibility upon this generation, which has witnessed the most ghastly ordeals war ever knew. It is our duty, yours and mine, to begin in 1921 the work of redemption. My last word would be of appeal to pluck out the seeds of war from the nations. May England open to the world in 1921, a post militant era, in which wars shall be no more than an ugly memory of an earlier period. While militarism holds its seat, there is little hope before the nations beyond periods of armed peace and outbreaks of destruction by war, on a scale so calamitous as was only opening when this great war concluded. If only out of great sacrifice good results are achieved, may the greatest good emerge out of this greatest sacrifice by the surrender of all armaments by all nations. Oliver Wendell Holmes expresses the beautiful thought of "millions of noble souls in eternity, waiting for parents fit to be born of," but we scatter the flower of a generation into a cauldron of molten metal, of liquid fire and of poison gas, and decide that that nation has won which stands the ghastly loss the best. We are still luring young men into this grim machine by seductive recruiting posters, and we are still retaining our hundreds of thousands in barracks. Other nations will do the same, and the familiar cycle will begin again, unless the public declare emphatically against it, and to the public my appeal is made. It was not Mars which was sending those strange signals to perplexed humanity early in 1920: it was the Angel of Peace, hovering about us in sorrow, trying to tell us the more glorious way she knew. Shall we not listen? If we do, how glorious will be the life of the next twenty years, when England converts her warships into schools of travel for students, when France forgets *revanche*: when Germany forgets her "Ueber

Alles" ; when Russia has forgotten violence ; when America moves in common impulse with all Europe and from every land of freedom and light there rises one anthem :—

Now may the God above,
Guard the dear lands we love,
Both East and West.
Let love more fervent glow,
As peaceful ages go,
And strength yet stronger grow,
Blessing the blest.

There now only remains to me the duty of summarizing some of the outstanding events of that strangely perplexed year 1920. Possibly the one of greatest significance bore direct relation to the Peace Treaty I have touched upon. I refer to the Spa Conference in July, the first round-table conference with German delegates on the terms of the peace. At that Conference Herr Stinnes, a coal magnate and extensive newspaper proprietor, one of the German delegates, proved himself a rather irritating and undesirable type, as is usual when one of the "big business" school is introduced to delicate questions of international policy. Dr. Simons proved a redeeming element on behalf of Germany. There was one grave development of crisis in the negotiations, causing the Allied Premiers to summon Marshal Foch and Sir Henry Wilson to Spa on "matters of extreme urgency." This incident was at least spectacular, but on the whole the Conference was successful and promising. It indicated the beginning of similar conferences, involving the inevitable and urgent revision of the Peace terms. Now that excessive lip-service to making Germany pay, and hanging the Kaiser, has satiated the people, we can get to reason and do what is best for the world. Chauvinist

France seemed still anxious to place indignity, even ignominy, upon the German Government, and still to expect that Government to preserve a dignified command over all affairs within Germany.

N. Lenin, the leader and apparently the director of the Soviet Government of Russia, created some stir in England by an extraordinary manifesto which he handed to a deputation visiting Russia in May on behalf of the British Labour Party. Lenin seems to have treated this delegation as sceptical schoolboys, telling in his letter what they asked and what he answered. This masterful man believes in revolution by violence, in the overthrow of capitalism by precipitate strokes, and in the epistle to the British workers, dated from Moscow on May 30th, he delivered an all-round castigation. This extraordinary leader of men stated that England was still carrying on war against the Soviet Government, helping General Wrangel in the Crimea and the White Guards in Poland. "For the purpose of getting access to the secret agreements of the British Government," he wrote, "it is necessary to overthrow it by revolution and to lay hold of all documents of its foreign policy." An Anglo-Russian crisis developed to an acute stage as the months passed. Poland, with the connivance of Great Britain, which supplied her with munitions, declared war upon Russia, and finding the armies of the Soviet too strong, sued for peace. Her peace delegates were summoned to the Bolshevik headquarters, but were not prepared with detailed peace proposals. The Russian advance continued, but with an offer to pause and even to withdraw to another line on reasonable conditions. The Poles were summoned to a peace parley on August 11th, but in the meantime England and France had again intervened, and on August 7th and 8th the Allied Premiers were again in conference, along with military and naval

advisers, about the vexed state of Eastern Europe. There seemed a fear of a Soviet Government of Poland being established at Warsaw, and while half a dozen men were deliberating over peace or war, demonstrations against war were taking place all over England. The populace, and notably the young men, seemed adamant against war, a singular reversal of the position six years earlier, and "Hands off Russia" fairly accurately summed up the spirit of the nation. This was different from the attitude of the Press, which in the main was ardently advocating the Polish need of help. The Anglo-Russian crisis indeed furnished favourable ground for a spark to ignite European revolution.

I have made previous and passing allusion to the Amritsar atrocity, which occurred on April 13, 1919. The whole circumstances of this ghastly incident were investigated by Lord Hunter's Committee, which presented its report in May of 1920. It condemned, because it could not avoid condemning, such callous and horrible persecution. "You have reported to me," wrote Mr. Montagu, Secretary for India, "that the Commander-in-Chief has directed Brigadier-General Dyer to resign his appointment as brigade commander, has informed him that he would receive no further employment in India, and that you have concurred. I approve this decision, and the circumstances of the case have been referred to the Army Council." This was the climax of the terrible tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh. All the morning of that fatal day General Dyer had patrolled parts of the city with a column of troops, reading at intervals a proclamation that any gathering of four men would be looked upon as an unlawful assembly, to be dispersed by force of arms. In the afternoon five thousand had assembled in an open space, many of them ignorant of the proclamation. General Dyer proceeded there with fifty

infantry carrying rifles, and with two armoured cars. These cars could not get through the narrow lane into the square but promptly on arrival the fifty riflemen, without any warning being given, were ordered to open fire into the defenceless crowd. The roll of rifle fire was maintained for ten minutes upon the terrified and screaming multitude, until 1,650 rounds had been poured into them, and ammunition was nearly exhausted. "My duty and my military instincts told me to fire," said General Dyer before the Committee, and he spoke upon the "necessary moral and wide-spread effect." The quality of mercy *was* strained in that case, one of the most awful in the modern history of colonies, and it was made far worse by the wounded being left without attention! The casualties were officially returned at 379 killed and over one thousand wounded. "His Majesty's Government," wrote the Secretary, "repudiate emphatically the doctrine upon which General Dyer based his action." Six days earlier, a notorious "crawling order" had been imposed for a certain thoroughfare, and natives of all types, having no connection whatever with a crime for which this was the unfitting punishment, had to undergo the humiliation of crawling. Truly it "offended against every canon of civilized government."

Would it be right to bracket the chaotic state of Ireland with these foreign and colonial questions? I think it would. The 1920 events in Ireland included murder and counter murder. There was the daily sensation of startling tragedy, of high officials being shot in broad daylight in the streets, of policemen being picked out and shot by day and night, and of the Lord Mayor of Cork being shot in his own house. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder in this case against the Prime Minister, the Secretary for Ireland, and others responsible for government. Early in August a drastic Coercion Bill for Ireland was hurried

through all its stages in eleven hours in the House of Commons and two hours only in the House of Lords. Mr. Joe Devlin was suspended from the Commons for his outburst of indignation in the course of this discussion.

Looking at domestic affairs, one of the early sensations of the year was the disclosure of abnormal wool profits, and the accusation centred mainly upon Bradford. A Committee appointed under the Profiteering Act reported in January that the Government had made profits on a colossal scale out of the controlled wool crops, and that amongst merchants a pre-war profit of one penny per pound on yarns had risen from thirteen pence per pound up to forty-three pence per pound. In the cases of thirty or forty types of yarn they reported that half of them showed profits of not less than twenty-five pence per pound. This report lent strong colour to the accusations of 3,000 per cent. profits, and to the admission of one Bradford merchant that if it rained gold from heaven and he gathered it into a blanket, he could not make money faster than he was doing.

The Royal Commission on Income Tax presented its report in March, recommending that no wholly earned income should be taxable unless it exceeded (*a*) in the case of a bachelor, £150; (*b*) for a married couple with no children, £250; for a married couple with three children, £350. Earned incomes up to £600 in the case of married couples with three children were to pay tax at half the standard rate. Co-operative Societies were made liable to the Corporation Tax, and this suggestion the Chancellor promptly adopted. There was strong contention over the proposed taxation of war fortunes, but the project was abandoned, even after the Inland Revenue Commissioners had shown the way.

Sir Eric Geddes, Minister of Transport, brought forward

a new scheme of railway management, involving a Board of twenty-one members, including shareholders—some of whom were to be large traders—and employees. Of these one-third were to be leading administrative officials, and two-thirds chosen from and by the workers. The English and Welsh railways were to be divided into six groups, including one for London, and the Scottish railways were to form another group. Machinery was devised for dealing with wages and working conditions by means of a Central Wages Board, with right of appeal to a National Wages Board. Compulsory powers to carry amalgamations into effect were included, financial guarantees ceased, and certain profits were to be devoted to development purposes. In conformity with this scheme railway fares were advanced another farthing per mile on August 6th, on third-class tickets only, and later in the month day excursions were started once again, shorn, however, of all their pre-war glory. They were only mid-week excursions to start with, and the single fare charged was not reminiscent of the old-time day by the sea for 2s. 3d. from almost anywhere.

In the Lindsey chapter I have made reference to the flood catastrophe which overwhelmed Louth on Saturday, May 29, 1920. The force of water in that impetuous rush was beyond description. The deluge was of tremendous volume and distinctly local. Heavily charged clouds seem to have passed up the East Midlands from Cambridge, and travelling abnormally low, made an atmospheric or actual contact with the Lindsey Hills. To all intents and purposes it was a cloud-burst, ripping over a thousand tons of material out of the hillsides and pouring down the rippling Lud into the unfortunate town. Stout walls yielded to its impetuous dash, low-lying quarters became lakes, but no boat could live in those stormy waters. I have visited the scene of the disaster and examined the

extensive damage. One stands appalled at this demonstration of the power of water. It is a flood disaster almost without precedent in the records of England, and the relief funds so generously contributed do not equal the extensive damage.

Several notable people have passed away in 1920. They include Margaret, Crown Princess of Sweden, whose letters and writings breathed such a charm of gardens and flowers and little children. She died on May 1st, in her 39th year. She was the daughter of the Duke of Connaught, and her death took place on his seventieth birthday.

Admiral Lord Fisher died on July 10th. Born in 1841, he entered the Navy in 1854 "penniless, friendless and forlorn," nominated by one of Nelson's captains. He rose to the dignity of Lord of the Admiralty in 1892, First Sea Lord in 1902, and on the outbreak of war in 1914 became First Lord of the Admiralty. He was Chairman of the Inventions Board and was himself inventive both of devices and expletives! Peace to the old warrior of the sea.

Eugenie, ex-Empress of France, died early in July, aged 94 years. What a dramatic life history was her's! There is nothing comparable to it in modern Europe. From 1852 until 1870 she was the brilliant centre of a surpassingly brilliant Court, whose festivities rose in a perfect cresendo of pomp and pleasure right to the fall. The Emperor, Napoleon III, honoured his bride as the star of the Second Empire, but she seemed to stake all on war with Germany, and lost the throw. She, once an idol, became a fugitive from an angry nation, and found refuge in England. Her only son, the Prince Imperial, was killed in the Zulu war, and her husband, the ex-Emperor, died at Chiselhurst. She lived to see German prisoners of war marching past her home at Farnborough, and she

lived to see an Empire that eclipsed her own, and which became proud and arrogant, beaten to sue for peace. This *revanche* was sweet to her, and after following all the peace discussions she returned to Spain, her beloved native land, to die.

With one further point from the annals of the year I will close this modest and disjointed history of twenty years. On June 9th King George formally opened an Inperial War Museum at the Crystal Palace, and he referred to it as

> "a memorial which speaks to the heart and to the imagination. We cannot tell with what eyes future generations will regard this museum nor what ideas it will arouse in their minds. We hope and pray that realizing all we have done and suffered they will look back upon war, its instruments, and its organization, as belonging to a dead past."

May the Pageant of the next twenty years prove that hope to be well founded. May it be gloriously free from the trying ordeals of war, and enjoy the healing and blessing of peace.

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